View metadata, citation and similar papers at core.ac.uk

brought to you by CORE

provided by UT Digital Repository

Copyright

by

Charlotte Helen Graziani Giles

2021

The Dissertation Committee for Charlotte Helen Graziani Giles Certifies that this is the approved version of the following Dissertation:

Embodied Labor, Life, and Pain of Women

Chikankari Kaarigars in Lucknow, India

Committee:

Heather Hindman, Supervisor

Syed Akbar Hyder

Sharmila Rudrappa

Snehal Shingavi

Clare Wilkinson

Embodied Labor, Life, and Pain of Female Chikankari Kaarigars in Lucknow, India

By

Charlotte Helen Graziani Giles

Dissertation

Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School of

The University of Texas at Austin

in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Texas at Austin

August 2021

Dedication

For Najma

Acknowledgements

I thank my community, AIIS teachers, mentors, friends, and family in Lucknow, Delhi, and Banaras who have supported me in my personal and academic endeavors for over a decade. There are too many to name but I hope they know that whatever my successes be are theirs as well.

This project would not have been possible without the many Indian kaarigars who selflessly gave me their time, wisdom, and teachings. My teacher, who is known in this dissertation as Rehana, stands out. The staff, students, and teachers at the "Kadhai Ghar" and the local non-profit I worked at were central to my making vital connections in the Lucknow. In many ways, they made my fieldwork one of the happiest and fullest times in my life.

I thank my many academic advisors, mentors, and colleagues who supported me and gave me a lot of tough love when it was needed. Some of these people have been with me since my days at Hampshire College and I was trying to figure out how to shift my dreams from a ballet dancer to something else meaningful. I have many friends from Hampshire who continued to support me throughout this often painstakingly long process. I think they are as relieved as I am to see it done.

I thank the graduate students in the Asian Department (and other departments) from my cohort and other cohorts.

My family, my parents and my sister, Josephine, who supported me even when (and this still holds true) I could only talk about embroidery, kaarigars, and labor. I am grateful to have such a family who tried to be as fully involved in my work as possible to the extent of reading my papers, listening to me talk about Marx, and visit me while I studied in Lucknow. My sister has been my great source of wisdom and inspiration. I can say that her academic pursuits motivated my own beginning back in middle school.

Abstract

Embodied Labor, Life, and Pain of Female Chikankari Kaarigars in Lucknow, India

Charlotte Helen Graziani Giles, PhD

Supervisor: Heather Hindman

The University of Texas at Austin, 2021

Bodies, pain, and the labor of chikankari embroidery are central to this dissertation. My attention begins with the hands, and other limbs and body parts that move and pain in the process of work. I focus on a group of Sunni Muslim women who worked together at Khala's chikankari embroidery Center. The first two months of my chikankari education left me with notebooks filled primarily with comments about my own bodily discomfort, complaints of pain by others, and descriptions of new stitches learned. Sitting in the Center, our bodies and the physicality of embroidery labor occupied much of the conversation and our wordless gestures. My attention to the bodies of kaarigars is an attention to how women move, how they feel and sense pain due to the labors they undertake, how they process and describe those pains through a particular vocabulary, and then how they manage them. I begin by investigating the way women move and travel throughout Khadra, their neighborhood in Lucknow. Women engage in a series of "tactical cuts" such as "gali cuts" to ensure their mobility within and beyond their mohalla. I then move closer to home, specifically to the home known as the Center where embroidery work takes place and the ladies experience and describe their embodied labor through a pain vocabulary. Women must often hold onto their own pain as well as that of others, an intersubjective act of emotional care labor, in suspension within themselves, leading to the painful and distressful feeling of "*tenshan*". Lastly, I move to the intersubjective relations built between the ladies as they give testimonies of their pain to the others who act as witnesses. To engage in these moments is to manage one's pain and to enable others to manage their own. The moments and events portrayed in this dissertation occurred at a certain time in India, under a right-wing Hindutva regime engaged in Islamophobic rhetoric and violence. The imprints of this violence are scattered

throughout and foreground my interactions with the predominately Muslim population of artisans.

Table of Contents

A Note on Transliteration

The transliteration scheme I employ in this dissertation is primarily phonetic. In Urdu, double consonants are unmarked such as in the word اڈا. This word is further complicated by the retroflex 'daal'. This letter comes out sounding like hard 'd'. In instances like this, I will not alter my spelling in any way. I indicate these hard and double consonants with double letters. Therefore, this word will be spelled 'adda'. In Urdu, long and short vowels are also unmarked. One example is ماحول. I will indicate long vowels at the beginning or middle of the word ('ee' vs. 'i' or 'oo' vs. 'u') with double letters. Therefore, this word with a long 'alif' will be spelled as maahaul. This will be to avoid the use of diacritic marks which I find to be distracting when used in writing with different languages. My purpose in using Urdu words at all in this dissertation is to establish them as ethnographically derived concepts which I engage with and discuss beyond their initial translation.

Glossary

afsos – sad, depressed, upset, glum

aozaar – tools, utensils, implements

atta – wheat flour

azaadi – freedom

be-parvahi – carelessness, without care or concern

bhatija – nephew (sister's son)

bhaabhi – sister-in-law

chai-wallah – chai-maker, chai-pusher

chhapai-wallah – block-printer

chashme – glasses, spectacles

chhat – roof-top, an additional room or space of the house

danda – stick

dard – pain, physical or emotional in nature

darwaza – doorway, gateway, archway

daraz – darning

darzi – darner

dekhna – to look, see

dhaga – thread, fiber

dilchaspi – interest, like, passion

fikr – worry, thought, concern

gapshap – gossip, chatter, chitchat, lively conversation

gauri – fair, light, white

ghat – water-bank

gudh – jaggery (raw sugar mass made from sugar cane)

guli – alley, road, street

hari mirch – small, green spicy peppers

iftar – meal after fasting during the month of Ramzan

'ilaaj – cure, treatment, medicine, remedy

'ittar – natural fragrance (not alcohol based), perfume

kaala – black, dark

kaam – work, deed, action

kaccha dhaga – thread made from "slob" (excess of the cloth-making process)

kaarchob – zardozi frame

kaarkhaana – workshop, factory, workplace

kajal – black eye cosmetic, also used as a remedy for eye infections

khaali haath nahin bethna – lit. trans. "don't sit empty-handed"

lathi – stick often carried by policemen

lehenga – garment with large skirt (*ghagra*) and top (*chhola*)

lo – hot-wind

maahaul – environs, environment, atmosphere, milieu

madrasa – Islamic school

mahajan – master cutter

majburi – compulsion, pressure, burden

mana' – forbidden

maqbara – shrine

masjid – mosque

mithai – sweet, confection

mota – fat, thick, wide, rough

mulmul – light, muslin-like cloth

n'at – genre of poetry in praise of Prophet Muhammad

na't khwan (the title for those who sang na't)

namaaz – prayer

nazuk – delicate, thin, weak

pakka – fixed, stable, permanent

pareshani/ pareshaniyan (pl) – worry, anxiety, concern

peshaab – pee, urine, piss

qeemti – valuable

romaal – handkerchief

roshni – sunlight, light

roza – fasting

sanvla – dark, tawny, tan

shaagird – student, pupil

shauq – passion, desire, hobby

sheesham – Indian rosewood

sikhaana – to teach, educate

surma – similar to kajal in use, slightly lighter in color with a clumpy powdered consistency. Typically made at home with ash, ghee (or oil), and other 'cooling' ingredients

sust – lazy

thakaan – tiredness, fatigue

ta'veez – amulet

takht – wooden, hip-height platform used for multiple purposes such as sitting, sleeping, cooking, etc.

tar – strand

topi – skullcap

ustaad – teacher, professor

wudu – ablution

zardoz – zardozi artisan

Introduction

I usually found it more comfortable to talk with a circular embroidery frame in hand. Older generations of Lucknowi women told me that they never used a frame; just the long edge of their pointer or middle finger to wrap the cloth around. Now everyone uses frames to ensure accuracy and speed. People put their personal touches on frames by wrapping at least one of the separate rings in scrap fabric. The practical purpose of this was to keep the fabric from snagging on any rough edges and potentially ripping it. Most of the best frames were made with iron (*loha*) to the embroiderer's size specifications. I always kept my frame with me. The words for conversation tended to flow out easier if our hands were busy. The old adage I heard from Lucknowi women of all ages is "*khaali haath nahin bethna*." "You shouldn't sit empty-handed."[1] This meant that even if you're resting, your hands should not. The sentiment captured in this phrase is uniquely South Asian and something that the Lucknowi women, of all classes, who I spent time with incorporated into their daily practice. It is a sense of repurposing, avoiding waste, creatively using things deemed useless. Rehana's daughter took a sheet no longer fit for sleeping with and turned it into a pillowcase. Time is a similar resource to be repurposed and used appropriately. A Hindustani term of this resourcefulness follows along from this concept: *jugaad.* To make do with what there is and to not waste any potentially useable resource. Women would say that often to bemoan the loss of that way of being, or to describe the way they inhabited their own bodies. They couldn't just sit without stitching, peeling garlic, cutting onions. I have memories of arriving home to Najma, my now-deceased host mother's place in the mid-afternoon after a day of Urdu classes. She would be sitting at the kitchen slowly and thoughtfully slicing an onion, with one hand clutching it, and the other grasping the knife with

[1] Another way to translate this phrase would be "You shouldn't sit with idle hands." This hints a more Christian Protestant work ethic that I attempt to avoid here through a more literal translation of "empty hands", "khaali haath."

her thumb at the top guiding the blade. One grows so accustomed to doing something with one's hands that to just sit and do one thing at a time seems to be a waste of time, energy, and limbs. This sort of embodied practice was the foundation of my research and this dissertation.

My *ustaad* (teacher) Rehana's house was her (now deceased) mother's and is now in her younger brother's name, Zakir. She lives on the ground floor and Zakir lives up a set of steep stone steps to the single room on the next floor. The entry way leads from a narrow, short hallway to her kitchen. Along the hallway is the water spigot. Near the entry is the latrine. A few doors down, is an older brother's home where he, Israr, lives with his wife who is, according to Rehana, awful (*kharaab*). In June, Rehana was getting over a long period of illness and started to return to embroidery. Rehana, like most of the chikan *kaarigars* (artisans, crafts-people) I knew in the area, would work through anything, but this illness had her bedridden, causing additional anxiety and worry over the family's increasing financial instability. Her often jobless husband was, yet again, jobless, leaving no earner in the house. Zakir, previously a *zardozi*[2] embroidery kaarigar, had been jobless for years. As was always the case, there were additional problems that would claim her attention and push her body back, perhaps too quickly, into embroidery. During these periods when she seemed to manage all of the worries that weighed on her, I reminded myself that the toll of such 'management' typically took the form of physical pain and mental distress.

[2] Zardozi is another style of embroidery. Unlike chikan, zardozi production is not restricted to Lucknow. I have encountered zardozi kaarigars all of the country, with each region and city having its own variations and specialties. While most depictions of zardozi workers in the media and pop culture are men, there are many women who do zardozi as well. There are fewer women doing it at the time of this research (2018-2019) due to the overall decrease in production. This is most likely due to a number of factors, but foremost of them being the recent revamping and implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST). According to multiple kaarigars, this tax has proved to be most damaging for kaarigars, and less so for shop-owners. More research is needed to make any substantial claims on this. The demonetization of 500- and 1,000-rupee bills on November 6, 2016 also negatively impacted all kaarigars given that most of them had no bank accounts and most of their transactions were cash-based.

This dissertation is an ethnographic study about the embodied movement, life, and labor of a group of female Muslim chikankari kaarigars residing in the area known as Khadra, in the city of Lucknow. Chikankari, or chikan, is the primary style of embroidery local to the state of Awadh (present-day Uttar Pradesh), most commonly produced in the city of Lucknow. My focus is on the movement and bodily comportment of the ladies producing chikan, and the rhetoric they used to evoke their own embodied experience as kaarigars. These conversations most often took place within dynamic domestic spaces, one being the Center. The Center is a chikan embroidery center located in the home of a woman we called Khala (meaning Aunt, a name given to a respected older woman). My interest is in the lived bodies of these few kaarigars. What I learned from them in this place came through an orientation to the work that their hands do (Ahmed 2006; Merleau-Ponty 2002); from their movement in and around Khadra according to the *maahaul* and *environ*s, of their *mohalla* (neighborhood), to the experience and management of physical pain and somatic suffering that comes with their gendered bodies, emotional labor, and *emotional care labor* expected of them. The somatic term that I repeat most often throughout this dissertation is the English loanword tension, used as a Hindustani word *tenshan.* Their embroidery work and hands may have been the device that oriented them, but what extended from there moved beyond their chikan labor.

To write about pain, violence, suffering, is to write about the somethings that are unknowable. Sarah Pinto's words point to this difficulty as well as the danger in engaging these unknowable things with words. She speaks in the context of psychiatric institutions in India, and the dilemma not just for her, but for the clinicians who must re-surface those pains through clinical and academic investigation. ""How do we speak about others' suffering without redoubling the lived violence by an interpretive violence anchored in the position of the 'well-

informed' researcher?" (Corin, Thara, and Padmavati 2004: 110). This is a dilemma shared by anthropologist, kin, and clinicians, for whom the needs to interpret, represent, and recount are part of a daily work associated with care but not devoid of the confining architecture of imposed meanings" (Pinto 2014, 72). The words I offer up here were voluntarily given and most often not said explicitly to me, but rather to an intersubjective, empathetic audience of kaarigars who were present and meant to act as 'witnesses' to these 'testimonies' of pain and suffering. With permission to record these moments to paper (and at times my phone's memory), I can only hope that I have presented them fairly and accurately here, and that the act of giving testimony gave them the acknowledgement they desired and needed.

Chatting around our frames

During one of my visits at the end of the month when Rehana was still sick, I came by and pulled out my roughly stitched bag holding my frame, cloth, and tools (*aozaar*). We stitched together as she updated me on current events in the neighborhood and the family. I had been on a birthday vacation and a lot had happened. First, she had finally managed peace between her brothers (although not with the elder brother Israr's wife). She was constantly expected to be the healing force, taking up the emotional care labor required. The three local siblings (Rehana, Zakir, and Israr) shared the single latrine at the entrance to Rehana's house, however, Israr's wife suddenly decided that she no longer wanted to share. He argued that because that latrine had (supposedly) been built using his money, he would then have the prior claim to its use. And with that proclamation, he cut off Rehana's and Zakir's use of the latrine. Rehana had been busy raising money by taking loans out from various people in her network. Finally, the beautiful (and better) latrine had been built. They placed it under the stairs where the water spigot had been. It had gleaming white tiles and a proper door. The old latrine had no tiles and only slab of wood for

the door. I said that since they have the really nice one, just watch and see if her brother and sister-in-law come and demand access to it. She said, "Even in the midst of my illness, I'm still worried. And then there's the brother and sister-in-law problem" ("*Apni bimari mein pareshani rahti hai. Aur us ki bhai bhavaj ki problem*.").

Next update was that Khala's Center seemed to have partially reopened. Rehana went by to pick up some colored thread for a separate project and saw only Tahira sitting in the Center room. Khala said the Center had closed (*band ho gayi*). Rehana said there were still women taking work home, like Tahira, but that no group of ladies was going there to work anymore. She said this happens with such centers, that gradually people stop going for a variety of reasons. It seemed so sudden to me. Tahira was allowed to sit in the room when she wanted because her home was not conducive for work. When I returned to the Center the following week, Beenish and her younger sister were there playing with Khala's baby niece. The heat seemed to make for an on-and-off condition of work.

We put down our frames for some chai and she told me about a new issue concerning one of her daughters, Alia. The latter used to be a zardozi kaarigar, taught by Zakir upstairs on the roof. Then came the decrease in that industry and she along with the other female zardozi workers were the first to stop work. One such woman explained this to me as the women ensuring that their men get orders before the women. For them, it was more important that the men stay employed. Their work did bring a bit more money per piece than the women's. Rehana said that the in-laws, who lived separately, were terrorizing Alia and her husband to get them to move out. The husband's sister's family lived there too, and they wanted to have the place to themselves. The fighting was physical. The in-laws hit them both, leaving Mantasha with a painful-looking long and deep wound, stretching from her hand to her wrist. So, for now,

Rehana's house, as per usual, was a halfway house for her daughters and their spouses away from abusive relatives.

When it was just us two in her house, this was a common scene: multiple cups of chai over a few hours, with our circular chikan frames, and for a period, a kitten (who had a saucer for its tea and soggy rusk). Rehana would often stop me to look at my progress and insert a story about other work situations prior to her time at the Center. That information only came out naturally when we were stitching. It was difficult to interview kaarigars without embroidering. There was a period when Rehana was still ill but bored at home, so she helped me by identifying some local zardozi workers to meet. On such occasions, Rehana did a little introduction explaining that interview does not mean interview in the very formal (and intimidating) way they understood it. All I wanted to do was to talk (*baat karna*) about the work. She then reassured them that this information would not go to the government and that I only did this because of my interest (*dilchaspi*) and *thesis* (she used the English word here). I had learned from my time at the Center that embroidering while talking, or just having it present, was an important factor in defusing any tension or awkwardness. This usually wasn't possible for zardozi, but I did bring my box of special *aari* (zardozi stitch) needles (*sui*) and even that helped. It only made sense that my visits with Rehana worked the same way. We picked up and put down the frame frequently to talk, often spurring new avenues of conversation. I saw chikan to be an important aspect of many of the relationships between women in the area. It was through chikan that I learned more about the daily acts of management that women engaged in to move, work, and handle pain and distress. The lived, embodied experience of chikankari kaarigars flows out from their embroidery and is not restricted to act of stitching.

A note on language, particularly the use of Urdu and Urdu-English terms in this dissertation. The way I interpret and define those terms are based on use, practice, and experience with them as they were invoked. I define them ethnographically. They are lived, embodied, and cultural concepts. Female chikankari kaarigars employed these terms in particular instances and I make those clear when I use them. While I do include some data about my work with male zardozi workers, these are primarily as comparatives. The language I discuss here is the vocabulary of women.[3] The way I translate certain words and phrases are full. They point to an array of cultural references which I attempt to address as much as possible. Words I investigate are common to those speaking Hindi/Urdu/Hindustani but are further colored by the women who use them. Therefore, when I do invoke them, it is to communicate something beyond what its literal English translation is capable of conveying. For other frequently used words, I provide the English term and the original Urdu word in parenthesis. As far as this dissertation is concerned, there are four translations or interpretations of the phrases and words I evoke. The first is its indigenous understanding. The words and the things it carries with it by those who speak and comprehend. The second is the translation that comes across in the short English literal, translations of individual words. The third is what the "Western" and Western-trained and -influenced global audience interprets through these individual English translated words. My above explication of the phrase "khaali haath nahin bethna" and rejection of a potential Protestant ethical interpretation is one example of this. While I will be unable to avoid all pitfalls of a similar type, I hope that my writing will bring forth an atmosphere of the terms in

[3] The way I describe and engage with select women's vocabulary here differs from those who have written about Urdu women's language: *begumati zuban*.
Minault, Gail. *Gender, language, and learning: essays in Indo-Muslim cultural history.* Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2009. Minault, Gail. *Secluded Scholars: Women's Education and Muslim Social Reform in Colonial India.* Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998.

use. The fourth, and perhaps most significant to this dissertation, is the translation of words through my experience. Each of these has their sway over this dissertation. I include a separate glossary in this dissertation for quick reference to all Urdu words I use, however, unless I identify the term as unique to understanding particular objects, ideas, and emotions, I will continue to use English after identifying the Urdu word from the field. I include the parenthetical only for the first use to avoid confusion and repetition.

The word I use to refer to the artisans or craftspeople who engage in any type of handcraft work is the Urdu (Hindustani) word, "*kaarigar*". The use of kaarigar differs widely from one artisan community to the next. In the chikankari industry, the women producers very rarely used it to describe themselves. The few male producers always used it. The term carried with it a gendered sense of the quality and value of chikan produced. However, few of even the most skilled female kaarigars used it.[4] As a comparison, in the largely male-populated zardozi embroidery industry, embroiderers use kaarigar to describe themselves and any zardozi producer regardless of quality of work. I did not spend enough time with female zardozi kaarigars to comment on their language. In an effort to not propagate this gendered language of craft, I refer to all craftspeople in this dissertation as kaarigars.

Somewhere behind a college in Khadra

For anyone new – designer, consumers, potential student (like myself) – who comes by the Center, Khala's husband instructs them either to wait at the College for their nephew to pick them up on his motorbike or gives them directions on how to approach through the *galis* (narrow pathways, or alleyways) and locate their house behind the College near a rubbish pile. This

[4] I'm aware of what the connotations have of using this term, of possibly imposing my own Western feminist training by trying to redeem or give value to chikan labor by referring workers in a particular way. This is something I will continue to think through as I continue this project.

mohalla is where I spent much of my time during my 10 months in Lucknow. The Center ladies referred to it as the "Sentar", therefore, I will as well. I decided to capitalize the English spelling of Center for the sake of clarity and to distinguish from other centers I visited. Khala lives there with her husband, two children, and a rotation of other relations, most of whom switch between her and her two elder sisters' home (their natal home), two doors down.

My ethnographic field started from Khala's home in Khadra and expanded to encompass parts of the Old City on both sides of the Gomti River. From Khadra and Daliganj, across one of the bridges I used most frequently (usually Pakka Pul, New Pukka Pul, or Daliganj Bridge) into south and southwest Lucknow – Chowk, Aminabad, Amber Ganj, Thakur Ganj, and lastly to Charbagh near the train station. Most of the kaarigars I knew were from Khadra and traveled to various parts of the city to work. I knew none who lived in the newer, planned areas of Lucknow located east of the Gomti, such as Indira Nagar, Gomti Nagar, and Vibhuti Khand. The old neighborhoods have housed many past generations of kaarigars. Wilkonson-Weber stated that those she interacted with agreed that Daliganj was most likely one of the oldest kaarigar residential areas. Claire Wilkinson-Weber's book *Embroidering Lives* is the first substantial ethnography of chikan kaarigars in Lucknow. In the more than 20 years since its publication, the industry has changed in many ways. This dissertation is not intended to be a comparative or revised overview of the industry, nor is this dissertation a study of the embroidery itself; however, I do address some of the changes as well as things that have remained the same. At that time, there were few new immigrants to the city, particularly those who took up chikan, and most of the embroiderers were still Muslim. At the time, women were the leading kaarigars for chikan, however, the memory of male kaarigars, great masters of craft, were not far behind. When I visited, the gender dynamics had shifted somewhat. While women are even more so the

dominant labor force behind the market, chikan is now described as a 'woman's embroidery,' compared to something like zardozi (which also has female kaarigars). Indeed, an older zardozi kaarigar told me, women were the ones to blame for any decline in the quality of chikan work. That women work from home was seen as a potential source of the problem of quality. This kind of talk was not restricted to men, in fact women also viewed workers who produced at home as inferior kaarigars.

The Center is Khala's home. To work at a center like Khala's, even if that center was in someone's home, was entirely different than working at your own home. The ladies had access to all spaces of the house, even the bed and living room. They were a bit more hesitant to enter certain rooms like the kitchen and bed/living room, however, they were not restricted. They were all quasi-workspaces in the Center. During my first visit to the Center in 2016, as I sat in the bedroom area, Shabana flitted in and out asking questions about how to set the stitches of a new piece. Central to this dissertation is the space the women travel through, inhabit, work in, and live and socialize in. Multiple domestic spaces, such as the Center scattered throughout the mohalla and Khadra orient the women in various activities that occupy their time and attention and sustain their communities. It was the very domestic nature of the Center that made it easy to travel to for most. There were other similarly-called 'centers' located somewhere in someone's home for chikankari production. The women who lived in the mohalla (and occasionally women from other parts of Khadra) were typically the ones who worked in them.

The term 'center' comes from the existence of actual government-funded 'centers' run by State or National Award winners (as Khala was). The winner is awarded a certain amount of money to set up a training center for her community in an effort to train the local women in a trade and a way of making money. Because Award winners ran these centers, a certain level of

quality was associated with the work they produced. The term ‘center’ now, however, has been used beyond these government-funded places to refer to any woman running a chikan production center from her home. As for the training bit, most of these run-from-home set-ups are involved in some kind of training. Such was the case with me and some of the other ladies I embroidered with. However, even those who came for ‘training’ admitted to knowing some stitches. They came to work and to maybe learn a few new ones. Rehana, for example, had been trained by a local National Award winner with a Center. Her mother also taught her. She came to Khala for the higher salary (3,500-4,500INR/month) and consistent monthly work. A chikan block-printer told me that the title of ‘center’ does not mean much anymore. Another shop owner said in English, “The centers are all fake, it's a fraud. It's very difficult to say anything about them.” Center work used to be better than the rest, he said. Now, anyone could call their outfit a center for the sake of getting more orders.

The Center and the surrounding areas of Khadra, were my primary field sites. I visited other places where women worked such as privately-owned shops, non-profit organizations, homes, and other centers. For a few months of my research, I also spent time with an embroidery institute. I refer to this institute as “*Kadhai Ghar*” (Embroidery House). There are an increasing number of these institute/design studios in the city. They are intended to guide and train new generations of kaarigars. The one I worked at was invested in the cultural heritage of embroidery, focusing on a few different styles with both men and women. I learned from and embroidered with both. These types of schools and institutes are often run by design school graduates who have returned to the city from places like Delhi, Mumbai, or Ahmedabad to be with their family and set-up their own business. Each place does something slightly different, be it in the lessons, goals, teachers, designs, or scale. Some focus primarily on chikankari and others

incorporate zardozi. This dissertation focuses on the lives and work of the women who work primarily in Khala's Center; however, I will occasionally refer to exchanges that happened at Kadhai Ghar, among other places I visited.

My fieldwork extended beyond the centers and institute. Homes, spare rented rooms, shops for fabric, thread, needles, chikan, and zardozi. I spent a good deal of time with shop owners, watching customers come in and out. We commiserated about the bargaining for items that took hundreds of hours and multiple hands to complete. If I arrived at the shop at the right time, I occasionally saw the lone, free-lance kaarigar arrive to sell an item to the store. Given my interaction with the consumer-facing side of this industry, I have chosen to focus primarily on the lives of kaarigars. Their bodies, experiences, and words are central. Throughout the dissertation I do describe some interactions with consumers; however, in the routine of being at the Center, these were few and far between. The absence is not a calculated one, but a reflection of the experience of working in the centers and institute. Kaarigars did not engage much with consumers. The group I worked with were, from my experience, almost entirely separated from consumers. There were very few businesses I visited where this was not the case. Even those who would occasionally stop by the Center to place an order were typically shop owners. Most of my interactions at shops were contrived and not the result of work at the Center. They occurred because I myself was a consumer. More investigation about this side of my research did not naturally stem from work at the Center, thus I did not include it here.

Muslims in Lucknow, India

Lucknow is known for its *ganga-jamni tehzeeb*. The tehzeeb (culture) where the Ganga (Ganges River) and Jamna (Yamuna River) meet. It is a symbol of the syncretic, multi-cultural and multi-religious life in Awadh, specifically, Lucknow. These two rivers mix and overlap

making something its own. As an Urdu student and volunteer for a few non-profits in the city, the concept was evoked to set Lucknow apart from other cities in India where sectarian or religious tensions that may be prevalent elsewhere are deemed absent in the city. It certainly had sway over the way different communities viewed themselves in relation to others and how they understood the city, compared to other Indian cities, as a whole. Although the members of the communities with whom I worked identified themselves as Sunni Muslim, many of them were cognizant of the religious and cultural diversity that has enriched their city's history. This took many forms. For example, the city's name name could have sprung from the name of a hero of the Ramayana epic (Lakshman)[5], its historic monuments resonated with the devotional aesthetic of the Shia nawabs who ruled the city in the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, and its networks of artisans reflected the diversity of various castes and languages.

These shared cultural practices are a shared trait of the city, as is its history of violence. Such violence has flared up between Shias and Sunnis, between Hindus and Muslims. During my stay in Lucknow, the prevalent fears within the communities in which I worked were those of the Hindu right and growing conservatism and nationalism that trickled down to Lucknow from Delhi (arguably, through the ruling party's representatives who hold power in Uttar Pradesh). These were often the topics of conversations with chikan and zardozi workers. Aside from a few mentions of the community and the attention they take during Muharram, Shi'as were not given nearly as much attention as Hindus as a social group, particularly right-ring political groups and their leaders, namely the Bharatiya Janta Party, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Minister of Home Affairs Amit Shah, UP Chief Minister, Yogi Adityanath, among others.

[5] Lakshman is the half-brother of Ram and chose self-exile to the woods in order to remain with Lord Ram and his wife, Sita.

According to my experience in Lucknow starting in 2008 until the time of my fieldwork in 2018-2019 has shifted away from intra-communal, sectarian tensions to those between right-wing, conservative, and high-caste Hindus, and those who are identified as "Muslim." I put Muslim in parentheses here because this is indeed a category of person that allows for the identification of certain bodies as "Muslim" and as therefore potential targets for random attacks and assaults against lone individuals, typically going about their daily lives. Who are Muslims? Who defines who and what a Muslim is? In the political climate in India during my research, I experienced the concept of "Muslim" (*Musalmaan* in Urdu) through my research-based, professional, and personal networks as to be about who within the community identified themselves as such and, external to the community, who identified a community or individual as "Muslim." Within these two was a range of possibilities specific many identifiers such as name, sartorial markers (clothing, jewelry, hair style, other physical decorations such as wearing or not wearing vermillion), externally visible grooming habits, language, city, the architect of one's home, or the neighborhood inhabited. To be identified as Muslim in the current BJP-led India is often to be marked as an outsider, terrorist, backward, dangerous, conqueror, and on and on. It is to open up the body to the potential for violence against it, to protect the larger Indian (read, Hindu) nation, and, in some cases, to seek retribution or justice for past perceived crimes against the nation.

The larger project of which this dissertation is a part, began in 2014 with initial trips to what would later become an expanded fieldsite of neighborhoods in and around Lucknow where chikankari and zardozi production occurred. This was also the year that that Bharatiya Janta Party won the Indian general election, marking the beginning of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's reign that extends through the time of my fieldwork and writing of this dissertation. As will

become apparent, the impact of Modi, Shah, and the millions of BJP supporters and party members, on the Muslim kaarigar communities in Lucknow (and, as I discovered during my fieldwork, throughout most of India) extended into the economic, cultural, and political aspects of kaarigar lives. Much of the pain and distress I was present for were steeped in these issues, appearing most especially when Muslim bodies came in contact with representatives of the state via the police. While this dissertation deals primarily with chikan kaarigar bodies in pain while laboring, I also address the emotional distress that comes with being Muslim in a city controlled by the BJP. As the capital of Uttar Pradesh, Lucknow is the home of the Chief Minister, Yogi Adityanath. These were constant sources of pressure and concern to a population already affected by a city and state unwilling to invest in the infrastructure of Muslim majority areas, leaving them to crumble bit by bit. This anxiety was a burden many women had to bear as caretakers of their family.

Histories of labor and kaarigari in India

The style of embroidery the city is best known for is chikankari, closely followed by zardozi. It is "white-on-white" – white embroidery on white cloth. The stitches are so delicate that the piece is meant to give the impression that the design has been woven rather than embroidered. By most accounts there are currently 32 stitches in the chikankari repertoire, although it's usually difficult to get any kaarigar to name all of them. Master kaarigars told me there used to be over 100 stitches but they were gradually forgotten over the years from disuse. They also blamed the mass chikan market on the dwindling number of stitches. I came across a few stitches that some women claimed were chikan and others said they weren't. One example is a stitch called the "lazy-daisy" (pronounced by this particular kaarigar as "*lejy dejy*.") Another woman sitting nearby claimed it was not chikan, but a "fancy" stitch. The number 32 is repeated

by the teachers in the massive government training centers and is then repeated to visiting journalists and researchers. I've also heard 36 a few times. This number is further divided by classes of stiches: flat, embossed/raised, *jaali*, and, depending on the source, *daraz*.[6] Each of these uses the fabric to produce a different aesthetic effect, with certain stitches often used together to create particular motifs.[7]

The origin story of chikan changes depending on who you ask and what history you read. Wilkson-Weber and Manfredi describe interactions with kaarigars who believe in one origin story over another. I did not experience that myself. It was difficult to get some women to talk about who taught them. They didn't seem to think their embroidery lineage was noteworthy. One of the ladies, Shameen said that the women in her neighborhood taught her. This lack of care about teachers was not pervasive amongst the women working at the Center. Rehana pointed to her mother and a local award winner as important figures in her training. Others I chatted with working in other centers and stores learned from local training centers run by NGOs and governments. It did not matter to them who taught them or how chikan came to be. The most recent publication by Paola Manfredi, *Chikankari*, and Claire Wilkinson-Weber's *Embroidering Lives*, outline roughly the same potential narratives identifying Bengal, Punjab, Lucknow, or Persia as the possible foundations for the style. None of these narratives were offered up voluntarily by any of the women I worked with.

Lucknow is a city of "kaarigari" (objective noun derivative of kaarigar, meaning craftsmanship, handcraft). The level of skill and depth of knowledge is difficult to find

[6] *Daraz* is typically in a class of stitching on its own. It is a way of bringing together pieces of fabric, similar to darning, in a way that creates a pleasing pattern instead of a straight darning stitch. For example, a daraz stitch is used to bring together the sleeve of a kurta with the bodice.
[7] For more complete information about the different types of stitches and the history of chikan, I turn to the following studies: Singh, Venna. *Romancing with Chikankari*. New Delhi: Tushar Publications 2004.

elsewhere. At least this is what I was told by those who come to Lucknow to get kaarigari done. The history of Lucknowi patronage began in the early 18th century with the Nawabs of Awadh. For kaarigars located in northern India, patronage came primarily from those associated with the Mughal Empire. Most kaarigars worked in various ateliers, owned and operated by royal and noble families.[8] The first Nawab of Awadh, Sa'adat 'Ali Khan, was appointed in 1722 as a semi-autonomous governor of the region for the Mughal Empire. The last was Wajid 'Ali Khan who was forced out of Lucknow and sent to live in exile in Calcutta via Kanpur by the British in response to his involvement and support of the 1857 Revolt (Llewellyn-Jones 2014). At the start of the over 130-year rule, the Nawab shifted the capital from Kanpur to the small backwater town of Lucknow. From there, the rise of the city was monumental. As Mughal power began to wane following the death of the Emperor Aurangzeb (who appointed Khan as Nawab to Awadh), the power and influence of the Nawabs grew, drawing in the cultural, social, and political might from Delhi, which was still, at least theoretically, the center of the Mughal Empire.[9] Poets, painters, calligraphers, and kaarigars of all types converged on the city of Lucknow, as did noble families from Delhi and European visitors hungry for a taste of the riches the city had to offer.[10] Much of this financial support for the arts and literature was dismantled with the 1857 Revolt and the violent British backlash against the Muslim populace. Their assumption was that all Muslims supported the Revolt. Lucknow was one of the final strongholds of the "rebels", and thus became a particular target of British revenge. The Revolt took its toll on the prior patronage system that sustained chikankari, zardozi, and other kaarigars in the city. Manfredi reports in her

[8] Verma, Triputa. *Karkhanas Under the Mughals: From Akbar to Aurangzeb*. Delhi: Pragati Publications, 1994.
[9] Aurangzeb diverted much of the Mughal influence from Delhi down to the Deccan where he waged war against the South Indian kingdoms and rulers. This is potentially one reason for the gradual decline of Delhi and massive shift of the creative talent to Awadh.
[10] Llewellyn-Jones, Rosie. *A Fatal Friendship: The Nawabs, the British, and the City of Lucknow.* Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985.

book, from the diary of a British woman living in Lucknow, the presence of previously wealthy, noble women who became reliant on their knowledge of embroidery, particularly chikankari, to support their families and communities. At that time, most of the master chikankari kaarigars producing for royal and noble ateliers were men, but this diary entry proves the existence of female kaarigars as well.[11]

Shifting broadly to textiles in the subcontinent, histories of labor and textiles in South Asia comprise a vast field covering multiple cities, provinces, and time periods (pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial). Ahmedabad, Bombay, Calcutta, Coimbatore, and Surat tend to attract the most attention as they were the largest centers of textile production employed in handloom and power-loom weaving in cotton, jute, silk, and khadi. Most of these studies focus on either the influence of the colonial economy on artisans, typically male weavers in non-urban areas, or on the larger urban centers, factory life, and labor movements. The economic studies of textiles have grappled with the extent to which traditional weavers and spinners were made extinct through deindustrialization and then reindustrialization of the urban centers (Haynes 1992 and 2012; Parthasarathi 2001; Riello and Roy; Roy 1992 and 1993; Washbrook 1988 and 2010). Of the urban center studies focusing on laborers specifically, debates revolve around the adequacy of Marx to explain the changes to India's economy (Chakrabarty 1989), if and how other scholars have misinterpreted Marx and thus the stage of India's transformation to capitalism (Chandavarakar 1998; Chibber 2013), and what the inconsistent movements of the Indian working classes communicate about the march towards capitalism in India (Chandavarkar 1994; Nair 1998). Subaltern studies scholars also contributed to the histories of labor in the early twentieth century on a variety of laborers and regions also questioning the extent to which Marx

[11] For more detailed accounts of chikankari history I refer to Claire Wilkinson-Weber, Paola Manfredi, and Teresa Kuldova,

could provide a useful framework for understanding Indian capitalism (Amin 1984; Arnold 1986; Chakrabarty 1989; Prakash 1990).

Missing from this otherwise diverse field of studies is an extensive engagement with women, particularly precolonial and colonial textile labor histories. In discussions of precolonial weaving communities, women are usually afforded a few lines stating that they had little to no role in the actual weaving part of the process (which has been disproven by Ian Wendt's comprehensive 2005 dissertation about weaving in early modern South India), or that there is no mention of women in the archive. Because women comprised a small percentage of the colonial period's factory population, their contributions to the industry have been reduced in scholarship to staying in their familial villages and supporting their urban working male kin from there. Samit Sen's *Women and Labour in Late Colonial India* and Janaki Nair's *Women and Law in Colonial India* have attempted to give voice to these women outside colonial and male-authored nationalist narratives. Sen's work also investigates the Factory Acts in colonial Bombay responsible for pushing many women out of the factories.

One of the major issues economic anthropologists of India have had is how to analyze and problematize the separation of formal and informal sectors. What makes it difficult is not just the lack of official documentation and statistics of informal workers, but also that sector designation can be influenced by the location of work. For example, home-based production in much of the embroidery and textile industry goes unreported, but those who work for NGOs from home are often counted as formal laborers. Or in the factory weaving industry of Bombay, some workshops contribute to either or both sectors depending on the contract (Harriss-White 2003). Jan Breman has addressed this problem in relation to mobile and seasonal workers (Breman 1996). He argues that if laborers contribute to the formal economy by working from

both sectors, then how can scholarship, which tends to analyze them separately, contribute to our understanding of economic and labor shifts. Barbara Harriss-White's work *India Working* also speaks about the division between formal and informal economy, claiming that informal does not imply unregulated. Douglas Haynes has also written about the difficulty in writing about informal vs. formal sectors, stating that without proper historical study, the development of either sector cannot be comprehended (2012). These three scholars provide another dimension to consider in my project; that women's work, while perhaps largely unaccounted for in official statistics, does not mean that their actions are not accounted for and regulated in some way by consumers, middlemen, shop owners, and fellow laborers along the commodity chain.

The only in-depth anthropological engagement with female embroiderers in Lucknow is Clare Wilkinson-Weber's work *Embroidering Lives: Women's Work and Skill in the Lucknow Embroidery Industry.* Her work has also discussed the feminization process within the *chikan* industry as occurring in tandem with the decline of the Mughal state and rise of globalization. She also highlights the relations between women in the production process. This work is a foundational text in any study about embroidery and gender in the region.

Producing chikankari

Over the years, the structure of the industry and division of labor has altered and shifted to accommodate the changes to the city and the needs of the market. The production process has settled into a series of tasks that lead to the final embroidered product entering the hands of the consumer; however, this process does not begin with embroidery. The necessary steps to create a garment generally remain the same across the industry, however, how that happens, the persons involved, and where they are located varies widely. Most studies of chikan have detailed descriptions of this process so I will not belabor each step, but rather give an outline of the stages

and people involved. I obtained this information through those who came through the Center, tips from the ladies there, and striking out on my own (although sometimes with Rehana) to put together my own practice pieces.

While pre-1947 and pre-1857 iterations of the production process most likely took place within a single atelier or kaarkhaana (workshop, factory), these stages happen in discrete places – homes, spare rented rooms, or small kaarkhaanas – across Khadra and the city. Middle-men and -women act as the unifying element to bring them together, although not without a price. For many mobility-restricted women (many of these restrictions I discuss in the first chapter), particularly those in the rural areas at the outskirts of Lucknow and beyond (i.e., Malihabad, Kakori, Mahmudabad, etc.), the middlemen were their connection to the urban market. In most cases, however, middlemen are known to have abused their position by taking bits of money from the wages meant for the women, and in extreme cases, using violence against women if they could not embroider items within a particular timeframe. As I address in the first chapter, in my experience, women in the urban center were mobile in particular ways and towards certain directions that enabled women to be these middle-people, often in place of men. One middlewoman said that she knew the hardship of being an embroiderer and tried to give a fairer wage. I did not know of a middlewoman who was able to survive on that position alone. Most were also kaarigars themselves. Being a middlewoman was a way to earn a bit of extra money. For Khala who was unable to leave the house often, her husband was the 'middleman', ensuring all outside work with outside persons. He was responsible for picking up thread, orders, and other supplies from Chowk and Nakhaas. She tended to work with some of the same chikan stores located there. Orders came from the store directly, and her husband would either visit those places to pick up cloth for the order, or another middleman, hired by the store, traveled to

Khadra by bicycle, and dropped off the prepared cloth. Rarely did she have visitors who commissioned their own pieces. I did see this happen a few times over my 10 months there, but the bulk of the orders came through shops.

Prior to its arrival at her door, the cloth has already been through a few crucial steps. Whoever has commissioned the garment must select the appropriate fabric. Depending on the quality of embroidery and eventual cost of the finished item, the range of possible fabrics is vast. Most items in the Center were done on georgette. Originally made from silk crepe, this material now, in my opinion, resembles quite the opposite of the smoothness you would expect. It is scratchy and rough, but due to the weight of the fabric, has a nice "fall." Because of the loose warp and weft, it is easy and quick to work with. The ladies preferred to work with it over any other fabric. The other fabrics required infinitesimally more effort and time to pull a needle through, but when speed is of the utmost importance, these small gains were important. I had a strong dislike of georgette, and tended to work with cotton, or mulmul.[12] Most of the Center-produced items were saris and lehengas, heavy with embroidery. Once someone selected the fabric, the next stop was either the tailor (*darzi*), mastercutter (*mahajan*) or the block-printer (*chhapai wallah*). If the item was a sari, it did not need to be cut prior to printing. For items such as a kurta, kameez, chhola, lehengas, or any other "stitched" garment (as opposed to unstitched garments like the sari), the mahajan needed to pre-cut the cloth to the general shape and size, without it actually being stitched together. After this stage came the block-printer.

Shops and kaarigars tended to have personal preferences and relationships with particular fabric shops, mastercutters, block-makers, block-printers, dyers, *dhobi*s (washerman), and pressers. There was some shopping around for a block-printer that might have a specific special

[12] Mulmul is a finer cotton fabric than regular cotton, but heavier than muslin.

collection (i.e., designs with animals, antique blocks, delicate floral borders, etc.). Khala used different block-printers (often depending on convenience and who was available) or the cloth came pre-printed according to the preferences of the shop. With the help of another chikankari scholar in the area, I located one particular printer in Khadra who became my go-to for all of my projects. This was one of the oldest shops in Khadra, run by a man named Faiz, the grandson of a great printer (whose own teacher was one of the last to do block-printing with fast, permanent color, not for chikan). The grandfather was still at the shop and would occasionally print, but most often could be found dozing behind the table where printing happened. If I came in with no ideas of what I wanted, he printed a dozen or so different designs for me to practice on, selecting some favorites here and there, for an absurdly low price of 50 rupees. I spent many hours in their shop, surrounded by wooden, carved design blocks stacked on top of each other in columns as tall as me (not very tall on a human scale), talking about the business and getting things printed I would probably never have time to complete.

I prodded Faiz constantly to introduce me to one of his block suppliers. After many months, with only three weeks left before my departure from Lucknow, at last, I was given the green light to meet this illustrious block-maker. I had been salivating over his designs for months. Understandably, Faiz was concerned I would spend all my money get my own blocks made and never return to his shop (it had happened to him before).[13] Before the cloth was purchased or printed, these kaarigars carve raw chunks of wood (*sheesham*, or Indian rosewood) by hand using dozens of carving tools of various sizes, a few different hammers or chunk of wood acting as a hammer, a compass (for circular designs), and ruler or protractor, into

[13] Each kaarigar had at least one story of being cheated in a massive way by a foreigner. Earning people's trust after these traumatizing incidents often took, like in this case, many months to prove my loyalty. My frequent visits to Gulzar seemed to help.

geometrically perfect (or near perfect) designs. Depending on the chikan production outfit, some designers had their own blocks that distinguished their garments from others. Khala was not one of these people, and most in her position did not have the capital to own their own collection of blocks.[14] Faiz worked with many block-makers, with each excelling in a particular type of design or motif. To print the design on cloth, he used a special, non-permanent powdered blue dye called *neel*. This dye was mixed with a chemical agent and water, creating a thick, sticky blue substance. This was put in a small rectangular, plastic holder with a pad of cloth used to absorb the excess, keep the dye from drying out, and make for even distribution of the dye over the carved edges of the block. Faiz lightly tapped the block on the pad to ensure the dye covered the chiseled block but did not cover it too thickly, and carefully, but assuredly, placed the block on the cloth, pounded it few times with a closed fist, and then slowly lifted it up with one side and then the other, ensuring that he did not shift the block and accidentally create a blurred or double image.

The design travels from block-maker to block-printer, to the cloth, and then into the hands of the embroiderer.[15] While in the embroiderer's possession, the garment may go from person to person depending on the stitches needed and the capability of the kaarigars. In the case of the Center, most of the ladies who sat in the Center were literate in the 10 or so most common stitches incorporated into their work. Most kaarigars do not know all 32, and none I met used all

[14] For the sake of research purposes, I went through the process of designing and ordering a block through Faiz's block-maker. We were a bit pressed for time considering my fast-approaching departure date, but he finished the block when I quickly agreed to his asking price (a rarity). A new block, depending on the size and intricacy of the design, may cost anywhere between 2,000-8,000 (or more) rupees. The design is first sketched out by hand on paper. The kaarigars I met depended heavily on compasses, rulers, and protractors to ensure as geometrically perfect a design as possible. They would draw the equidistant lines and circles to make up the space of the block directly on the wood to ensure that accuracy. The design was then draw on the block according to the geometric space. The chiseling came after this. To commission one block, let alone an entire collection to represent a brand, was a financially and temporally costly venture that most centers, like Khala's, could not afford.

[15] Kaarigars in each of these stages will hotly contest the question of who has most the creative control. Wilkinson-Weber has addressed this question in her ethnographic work about chikan.

32 on a regular basis. In this case, I have heard of (but not witnessed myself) middlemen who shift a single garment from woman to woman, each completing a few types of stitches. My impression at the Center is that the inclusion of multiple stitches, or "valuable" (*qeemti*) stitches (i.e., those requiring more time or thread, like "raised" stitches, to produce), would make the garment more valuable and expensive. This was especially true for those like jaali, a type of stitch that involves pulling apart the warp and weft threads of the cloth to create lattice-like designs. Khala had a few women who specialized only in jaali work. Once the embroidery work was completed, Khala gave the garment a careful look for any missing motifs or stitching, and finally, to cut stray threads from the backside of the embroidery.

The next and final stage (if it was not a pre-made item that needed to be stitched) was for the garment to be sent to the dhobi. The term dhobi refers to any washerman, however those who work with chikan, only work with chikan. They are experts in the mixture of strong chemicals and bleaches, and the cleaning regimen needed to remove the *neel* (fast blue dye). The process and chemicals needed to do this were different if the cloth was white or colored. Once they removed the dye, they or someone else starch and press the garment, and return it to the middleman, embroiderer, designer, or store. Most kaarigars had a few different people at each stage of the process in case one person turned out to be sick, too busy, or unavailable. Some stores and labels have monopolies over the kaarigars they employ, providing an end-to-end, consistent product with the same hands working on the cloth. I witnessed each stage of this production process, spending more time in some rather than others, depending on the types of relationships I was able to build.

At a certain point in my research, I tried to visit as many sites as possible with Rehana where stitching, printing, washing, and selling happened. My purpose was and has continued to

be to focus on the chikankari kaarigar's lived body experience of the industry, as they move within and beyond it. She knew about these places, how to get there through an abundance of *gali-cuts* (Chapter 1), what blocks were best for the type of embroidery I wanted, and which store-fronts specialized in what. It also gave her an excuse to get away from her husband who, like most of the men I met and heard about, frequently acted as roadblocks to women's mobility. These trips around Khadra and other parts of the Old City are examples of various ways a woman may move around space "like a girl" (Young 2005).

Embroidering bodies

My focus and intent upon arrival in Lucknow was to start with my hands and a frame; first, the small, circular chikan frame, and then the square, wooden zardozi frame, or adda (or *karchob*), as they called it. To stay attuned to the embodied experience of the kaarigars around me it was important that I attempt to become proficient at chikan or, at least, literate in it. I did not expect the degree to which it would become nearly an obsession. After the first few rocky weeks of handling the needle and becoming accustomed to the feel of cloth and frame in hand, I found it difficult to put it down. I brought it down to dinner. I stitched while watching TV with my host family. I stitched together a bag for my projects from scraps of fabric and toted it along with me everywhere. I often pulled it out when I was meant to be "interviewing" women who worked from home in the area. I brought it out first to show what I worked on. This habit became an important pathway to conversation. As I progressed in my stitching, the quality of my embroidery seemed encouraging to most kaarigars, that I had at the very least spent time practicing to get to that point.

This dissertation began with embroidery which, as I argue in the chapters that follow, served as the basis for the potentiality of intersubjective relations. To trace intersubjective

relations and interactions is to discover what is important in the lives of those involved. Abdellah Hammoudi describes this in the anthropological field as learning the "grammar of a particular place" (Hammoudi 2009, 252). The importance of embroidery in my interactions is not to say that our exchanges were only related to that labor. It does, however, communicate something about what is important in the balance of relationships between those in the community, and what they found in individuals who were literate in embroidery.

This dissertation focuses on a group of women who worked together at Khala's Center, and a few others I met along the way and at the embroidery center. This is not meant to be a survey of the industry and I did not attempt to make it so. My goal was not to interview as many kaarigars as possible but rather to feel out the *environs* of the places I embroidered, the way bodies moved throughout, and the centrality of the activity of chikan labor. I tried not to stray too far from these areas merely for the sake of meeting another kaarigar. To meet and talk was relatively simple, especially with an embroidery bag with chikan in it. Less simple was becoming proficient enough for the women I encountered to take me seriously. The quality of my embroidery was evidence of my commitment to time and repetition. While the ladies took their time in opening up to me, I understood that to be due primarily to my ability to understand sensations of bodily pain rather than a refusal to bring me in to the environs of the Center, pain, and embroidery in general. My experience was that it was my willingness to do, to repeat (*do baara karna*) again and again, that encouraged them to believe in my interest in their embroidery labor, and then, perhaps, interest in their other labors.

*****

> To feminism's recognition of the body as a cultural form and "site" of "disciplinary power" poststructuralist thought has contributed two additional elements...[it] has encouraged recognition of the fact that prevailing configurations of power, no matter how dominant, are never seamless but are

> always spawning new forms of subjectivity, new contexts for resistance to and transformation of existing relations. Second...[it] has encouraged us to recognize that the body is not only materially acculturated...but also mediated by language: by metaphors...that organize and animate our perception and experience. (Bordo 1993, 289)

The first two months of my chikankari education left me with notebooks filled primarily with comments about my own bodily discomfort, complaints of pain by others, and descriptions (occasionally accompanied by terrible sketches) of new stitches learned. Sitting in the Center, our bodies and the physicality of embroidery labor occupied much of the conversation and our wordless gestures. My attention to the bodies of kaarigars is an attention to how women move, how they feel and sense pain due to the labors they undertake, how they process and describe those pains, and then how they manage them. From the lengthy quote above, Susan Bordo points to the body as a site of power but one that is incomplete. It is also a site of creativity which the subject may transform and employ to resist. I hesitate to use this term, 'resist,' as I do not want to imply this is always consciously done, or that the women would always describe their actions this way. Certain situations called for, as I describe in the first chapter, tactical movements, rather than something that actively pushed against, and others were more definitely moments of resistance. Bordo's quote, rather, encourages an active engagement with bodies, willing to shift as needed. My body's complicity in embroidery labor made it accessible to ladies to refer to in their language and metaphor, and it is their words that describe the bodies in this dissertation. This dissertation draws from multiple disciplines, each attempting to understand and communicate the senses and feelings within our lived, gendered bodies, particularly those of physical pain and emotional distress. My focus is on this group of female kaarigars as lived bodies occupying a somatic cultural space (Kleinman and Kleinman 1991).

The experience of the body is central to phenomenological practice and approach. Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Brentano, and Sartre are early figures to elaborate on this methodology. Embodied knowledge is a feminist framework. de Beauvoir was one of the early feminists of the second wave to see the feminine body as significant to the female experience. The woman is the Other in every situation merely by not being identifiable as man. Her phenomenological approach in *The Second Sex* highlights the embodied experience of women.[16] The constellation of social and cultural factors contributes to a woman's experience as woman, and it is what makes the process of 'becoming' woman, rather than being born as a woman. de Beauvoir's contemporary, Luce Irigaray similarly sees the woman as something other than or separate from, by describing her as a place unto itself. One way to describe this socially constructed feminine body is through Bourdieu's 'habitus.' Kleinman and Kleinman invoke Bourdieu's habitus to understand the "social matrix" out of which 'experience' comes. As Kleinman and Kleinman remind us, this embodied experience will, therefore, only ever be partial and always incomplete. It is from this second wave of feminist thought that Marxist feminist standpoint theory comes to fruition. Scholars such as Sandra Harding, Nancy Hartstock, and Donna Haraway are some representatives of this theoretical stance. Donna Haraway's 'situated knowledges' is one way for the scholar to account for the partial knowledge Kleinman and Kleinman discuss. Haraway points to "vision" and the desire for a "doctrine of embodied objectivity…feminist objectivity" as leading to "situated knowledges" (Haraway 1988). Her interest in vision as situated is reflected in parts of this dissertation as I discuss the eyeballs as the source of much suffering and thus, therefore, an embodied experience in two senses; one of embodied suffering, and the other of a broader embodied, objective knowledge. Current studies that consider the significance of

[16] de Beauvoir was not loved by her feminist contemporaries. Her strong sentiments regarding childbearing, to them smacked of misogyny and an effort to make women like men. Others read her works as mere extensions of her long-term partner's thought, Jean-Paul Sartre.

phenomenology, and embodied experience and movement include those by Sara Ahmed, Nirmal Purwar, and Iris Marion Young. Their traces may be found throughout this dissertation. Ahmed, particularly through *Queer Phenomenology*, engages with the queer body as phenomenologically oriented, per Merleau-Ponty's sense of orientation, in a particular direction. This study along with another by Ahmed, *Willful Subjects,* follow the directions bodies face and how those bodies are then read as potentially queer and willful. The orientations of bodies tell us about the worlds they inhabit as well as the embodied experience itself.

The body figures in this dissertation in a few ways. First, the body of the kaarigar is the site from which embodied experience, labor, and knowledge come. This sense of the body is central in phenomenological methodology and writing. In the Husserlian perspective, embodied experience places the significance on the lived body, the senses and significations according to the body which is at the center. Phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty's body is one that is oriented toward a device (e.g., a table). This orientation is temporal in that it accounts for the history of social interactions with that device, or "sensings." Second, bodies as parts that separately and as a whole may be fetishized while in the act of productive labor. In the case of handcraft industries like embroidery, the attention is on the hands of the kaarigar. In Piya Chatterjee's work, *A Time for Tea*, she lays out a history of imagery used in tea marketing, with the arched back of the worker carrying a sack of tea strapped around her forehead, or the slender fingers plucking tea leaves from a tea bush. Similarly, in chikan or zardozi, the attention is over the shoulder of the kaarigar, on the frame and the fingers holding a needle. These images trace the value between the garment in production and where the value of that item lies. A third figuration of bodies in this dissertation is to think of bodies as affect in space, as well as effected by space (or by other bodies that populate it).

Scholars across the disciplines approach the female gendered body as something unusual, separate, or Other to whatever *space* it happens to reside. Much of this is spatial work. Scholars such as Sherry Ortner and Michelle Rosaldo pointed to the understanding that gender is divided between culture and nature, with women assigned to the latter and fundamentally unimportant in the formation of the former. A further spatial division of gender is that between the inner and outer, the domestic and the political (Landes 1998; Lara 1998; Mouffe 1993). The second wave of Western feminism may have rejected the home as the space of women, however, that accounting has not helped scholarship to understand the multiplicity of ways other cultures and communities interact with and reside in it. Early male geographers such as Yu-Tuan (2001) and Bachelard (1994) saw the home as something apart from everything else (similar to how women are Other to the understandable male body). Feminist geographers such as Gillian Rose, Linda McDowell, and Doreen Massey have directly tackled this lack of accounting of gender and space. Massey strongly states the significance of space and gender here: "From the symbolic meaning of spaces/places and the clearly gendered messages which they transmit, to straightforward exclusion by violence, spaces and places are not only themselves gendered but, in their being so, they both reflect and affect the ways in which gender is constructed and understood" (Massey 1994, 179). Other contributions from the field of humanist geography include Marxist geographers such as David Harvey and Henri Lefebvre, those interested in mobility and movement like Michel de Certeau and Nigel Thrift (2004), well as recent geographers as Stephen Legg (2019), looking at cities in modern India. Further, in the field of anthropology, it is only with the relatively recent turn to women and women of color's bodies, and the bodies of non-heteronormative scholars that understandings of gender, race, caste, class, and place may come in concert with one another (Behar and Gordon 1995). Such is the case

particularly with the bodies of laboring brown women in colonial and post-colonial contexts. My goal is not just to argue for the fluidity of space and the futility of referring to the domestic space as somehow untouched by what lies beyond it. Feminist geographers, anthropologists, sociologists, and historians have argued these points thoroughly. My intent in this dissertation rather is to further expand an understanding of the complex ways in which gender and space play mutual roles in their own construction, and how various productive and emotional labors contribute to that.

Headed by intersectional scholars such as Aihwa Ong, Chandra Mohanty, and many other feminist scholars of color, another group of feminists has been calling attention to the problematic category of the 'Third World Woman' and addressing the inadequacy of previous Western-centric frameworks of gender. This move brings in new ways of thinking about women's labor with the increase of local and multinational factories (Caraway 2007; Fernandes 1997; Finkelstein 2019; Freeman 2000; Lynch 2007; Ong 2010; Wright 2006), markets that see women of color's bodies as commodities (Lakkimseti 2014; Roberts 1997; Rudrappa 2015; Shah 2015; Tambe 2009), and their homes as open for commodity labor (Mies 1982; Singh and Kelles-Viitanen 1987; Tarlo 1996; Wilkinson-Weber 1999). These studies resist the "myth" that the Third World working woman is singular and is there to be used and disposed of by capital (Wright 2006) regardless of region, culture, or language. They also discuss the ways in which female laborers both reinforce and push against patriarchal expectations of women (Abu-Lughod 1990; Kandiyoti 1988).

In research about sewing, embroidery, textiles, or any delicate handwork in general, rhetoric about "natural" or "gendered" labor often enters the conversation. Women, it is said, are chosen for certain jobs because their nature allows them to do more eye- and hand-intensive and

precise work rather than labor requiring heavy lifting. Piya Chatterjee, Carla Freeman, Caitrin Lynch, Aihwa Ong, and Melissa Wright investigate the ways fetishization comes into work, most often factory textiles or electronics. Such studies that struggle with claims of natural gender capacities and labor are very helpful for my project. While female *chikan* workers are often described as women who simply have nothing better to do and who are already trained in household embroidery, *zardozi* workers are artisans, men, and besides invoking the fact that *zardozi* is "*aadmi ka kaam*", no other mention of gendered attributes are necessary to reinforce their superior embroidering skills.

Studies of commodified intimate labor address the different ways women's bodies end up on the market, be it through sex work, reproductive or childcare capacities, housework, or other affective and spiritual labor. Chaitanya Lakkimseti (2014), Lucinda Ramberg (2014), Svati Shah (2014), and Ashwini Tambe (2009) contribute to this scholarship by focusing on different forms of sex work, ranging from women working on streets, from hotels or bars, homes, or on construction worksites. Ursula Sharma's work (1986) is one of the few studies engaging with the different forms of housework in South Asia and how that affective labor lives on through the remunerated work of their children. The subjects of Ramberg's work, *jogatis*, do not engage in sex work, but because of the stigma attached to *devadasis*, their non-heteronormative and non-marital relations with men in their communities are often construed as inappropriate and another form of prostitution. *Jogatis* challenge the separation between publics and privates, and blur the line between household and economy by turning their bodies and relationship with the goddess into their source of income. Dorothy Roberts (1997) and Shellee Colen (1995) among others have written about West African and low-class immigrant women who take care of wealthy family's children instead of their own. Sharmila Rudrappa's book *Discounted Life* discusses the

relationship a surrogate mother has to her own body which is used to produce a baby that has no biological connection to her. These studies differ drastically in their subject, approach, and methodology but they all write about the ways women's bodies enter markets, and how women work in ways that commodify their previously unremunerated work in the home.

The second and third chapters are concerned primarily with the bodily reside of labor: pain and distress. The most apparent form of residue is the physical manifestation of chikan wage labor (eye strain, gnarled and calloused hands and fingers, aching back). The other form of residue comes from the other labors that occupy their time; one being housework, the other, care and emotional care labor. My experience showed me that the latter of these two was the worst of the three. It occupied more of our conversations at the Center, and, therefore, occupies more of this dissertation. My purpose in these pages is to put forward what occupied their words, bodies, and emotions as by what was shared with the group in the Center. The role of the ethnographer in how to manage and present this knowledge is somewhat clear in terms of what is at stake. Kleinman and Kleinman's 1991 essay, "Suffering and Experience", initiated a conversation about the anthropologist's "interpretive dilemma" of engaging in the same pathologizing of suffering that psychiatrists employ; however, instead of that suffering taking the form of a diagnosable disorder, the anthropologist describes suffering as "social role, social strategy, or social symbol…anything but human experience (Kleinman and Kleinman 1991, 276). This diagnosis of suffering, be it psychological or physical, draws us away from "the flow of experience" which is interpersonal and intersubjective, not merely personal or social. This dissertation is not intended to diagnose or identify the sources of pain and distress. The identification of those sources was never in question. My interest is similar to that of Nancy Scheper-Hughes and Veena Das; to identify the language women used, and attempt to

understand the multi-layered composition of pain and distress at any given moment or on any given day, and the significant role of the Center as space that makes these intersubjective conversations possible.

One theoretical avenue that I do not take up in this dissertation but shows potential for future research is the connection between South Asian Studies and African American Studies, and their engagement with the domestic space as one of revolutionary possibility as well as constraint. hooks' essay "homeplace (a site of resistance)" is a starting point for reimagining 'home' as a site of decolonization (hooks, 1990). Partha Chatterjee's *A Nation and its Fragments* and Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe* do engage with the importance of the home as a place where the nation's culture and its markers were protected, primarily by women. However, the resistance hooks identified is unrelated to nation-building projects. The caretaker is a "radically subversive political gesture", and the home is a refuge created by her. For Dorothy Roberts, the domestic space is one where work for women continues, but it is racially categorized as either "spiritual or menial housework" (Roberts, 1997). From my experience in Khadra the homeplace could be a radically subversive place for women in their predominately patriarchal environment. This is not to say that the patriarchy remained outside the walls of the home. This is not the case. Just as hooks reveals in her essay, the home of white slaveowners was a place of labor, racism, and violence for black women. And their own homes were places assigned to them by sexism. But hooks argues that that does not matter. "It is more important that they took this conventional role and expanded it to include caring for one another, for children, for black men, in ways that elevated our spirits, that kept us from despair, that taught some of us to be revolutionaries able to struggle for freedom" (hooks 1990, 385). I see the work by black feminists as contributing the expanding our understanding of intersubjective and

interpersonal feminist possibilities through the space of the home. The chapters that follow are a hopeful beginning in how that space figures in the embodied experience of kaarigar pain, distress, and acknowledgment through intersubjective, emotional care labor.

Chapters

The three chapters that follow convey the embodied experiences of the kaarigars in the chikankari center in Khadra. They are told from my perspective and are beholden to my reading (potentially mistaken) of any given situation. I do not call myself a witness. I reserve that term for the women who are each other's witnesses to one another's testimonies to their lived experiences. I was welcome to be a part of that exchange sometimes, particularly when it seemed like I could be an intersubjective listener. My body's engagement in the act of embroidery was a part of this. But for other moments, as I discuss, I was merely present for someone's testimony and attempted to record the relationships in these spaces.

The first chapter focuses on the movement of chikankari kaarigars in and around Khadra. The use of tactical movement to move around and beyond their mohalla speaks to their embodied and spatial experience. Layers of gender, class, race, and religion (not so much caste) impact the body and its ability to move around. The environment that impacts mobility and where they can move also influences how they view certain places and the activities and work that happens in those places. Of particular interest is the home, or home-like places, such as "centers" which are often located in other women's homes, making it easy to travel there without restriction. Tactical movement is meant to maintain and increase women's mobility around the area and city not just to manage restrictions placed on them by the environment and (mostly male) family members, but also to increase comfort as they move. This chapter is divided by sections about a series of 'cuts' through galis, embodied comfort, and transportation. This

analysis is situated in a particular temporal period when unemployment is high amongst Muslim men in Khadra, putting a great deal of financial and emotional pressure on women. The zardozi industry has decreased drastically since 2014/2015 which has dragged down the Khadra economy, and influenced women's movement with more unemployed, bored men at home and loitering around with nothing to do. All of these factors impact women and I attempt to touch on each of them through the concept of *environs* which comes by way of the Urdu word *maahaul* (environment, atmosphere, milieu).

The second chapter moves into Khala's Center. Here I focus on the way women describe and experience pain in the company of other women. Pain is spatial, gendered, temporal, and political (Kleinman and Kleinman 1991), and it creates the *knotted bodies* (a concept I introduce in this chapter) of kaarigars. This chapter is an attempt to grapple with the ways pain and distress interrupt the physical wage labor that is chikankari, and the weighty burden women must hold in suspension. Writing about pain caused by productive labor is to address the production of residue; one being surplus value that adheres to the commodity, the other, pain, that adheres to the body of the producer. Once the commodity has been conveyed to the consumer or middleman, all that the kaarigar is left of that process is the pain. This chapter will address the physical pain and bodily comportment of chikankari, as well as the distress and somatic pain due to emotional and emotional care labor. The terms employed by the ladies – *dard, pareshani, majburi, gham,* and *tenshan* – are central to this discussion.

The third chapter begins with hands – what they are capable of telling us about the world around us as well as building a world around themselves. Hands may also lead to the building up of intersubjectivity, and then testimonies (language) and witnessing and touching and gesturing. These make for a foundation of sharing time with those relationships, and reclaiming time from

the production process to manage pain. Here I argue that hands, as explicated by scholars Wittgenstein, Veena Das, Husserl, and others, are central to the intersubjective development of relations, and therefore central to the possibility that chikan kaarigars manage their pain by giving testimonies of one's own, and bearing witness to other's, pain. This chapter also looks at the prevalence of carelessness and neglect in women's lives through anecdotes about fire. Women's ability to give testimonies is a way to refuse that neglect, and for witnesses to provide emotional care. The final section looks at the use of YouTube *n'ats* (genre of poetry in praise of Prophet Muhammad) and chai/samosas/snacks to temper and lessen physical and emotional pain. While the second chapter focused on the pain itself, this third chapter addresses the management of that pain.

I conclude the dissertation by turning to Rehana and the mohalla after my departure, and the impact of political and social movements during and after my fieldwork. I discuss the experience of the Muslim kaarigar in India at the present moment. I returned to Lucknow 6 months later and met with her, Khala, and Tahira. Rehana's relationship with me made continuing work at the Center impossible. This and subsequent difficulties, many of them health related, due to her lack of employment were extremely difficult to hear about, even worse considering I could do nothing from my place in the United States. The way we as ethnographers leave our fields will not be as they were when we arrived – better, worse, neutral, maybe all three. Whatever impression I made was further complicated by covid-19 which has caused untold damage in the worlds of kaarigars.[17] Kamala Visweswaran talks about the refusal to become an 'informant.' What would this project have been if Rehana had refused me? I do not

[17] Paton, Elizabeth. "India's Fashion Artisans Face 'Extreme Distress' in Pandemic." The New York Times. The New York Times, April 25, 2021. https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/25/fashion/india-garment-workers-luxury.html. Holland, Oscar. "Indian Artisans Struggle to Survive in Fashion's 'Invisible Supply Chains'." CNN. Cable News Network, May 2, 2021. https://www.cnn.com/style/article/india-fashion-artisans-covid/index.html.

like the tone of the word ‘informant,’ however, I have come to appreciate it more following my time in Lucknow.

Chapter 1: The maahaul in the mohalla

Notes from December 29, 2018: "This day, there was almost no one [at the Center] so I worked on the roof with Sanno appi, who showed me how to do katuri jaali[18]*. She was having an intense conversation with Sajda Begum. But most important about this day was the feeling and atmosphere that I get sometimes when the women want to enjoy themselves and their time together more, and sacrifice by working a bit less intensely than they usually do. I can't even say what the difference is because it doesn't necessarily rely on a certain person or fewer people. It's just there, in the air. And often, if it's a bigger group, then not everyone is on that same wavelength. Like Rehana, she is often more inclined to work more and socialize less.*

"This day was a particularly relaxing one. Sanno and I sat on the wooden takht [wooden, hip-height platform] *together. She taught me the katuri jaali. Days like these create those dreamy nostalgic scenes that people have which is the primary way of being for the creation of chikan. This scene in the sun lasted until Sajda Begum showed up and started chatting with Sanno appi. They were talking about some local woman whose husband was restricting her movements and they found this unacceptable. The ability and freedom to at least come to the* [C]*enter for work seems to be the bare minimum that women expect in terms of movement around the area near their homes. This husband, they said, wouldn't even allow her to do this. They used the words azaadi* [freedom] *and paabandi* [restriction, constraint] *to describe this. At some point, Sanno started talking about the difficulties of the sister living situation. I got very little of the details. I eventually left but it was a pleasant afternoon in the sun but was oddly empty of the stress and tension and liveliness that the ladies bring when they're present."*

Women in Khadra had expectations of their space and their mobility. Travel or movement to Khala's Center where women from the surrounding *galis* (even those in a mohalla, further down the road in Khadra) went to work or retrieve new pieces was one of those expectations. Movement to certain places says something about the significance of space in the

[18] Katuri jaali is one of many stitches in the category known as jaali. The stitch involves pulling apart the warp and weft of the fabric's weave to create different windowpane or lattice patterns. To know any jaali stitch is unusual. Some women are keepers of this knowledge and are remiss to pass it on because it is so valuable. Some women are designated as jaali experts and only do that style of stitch. Rehana, Khala, and her sisters are unusual for knowing to do multiple types of jaali along with the other stitches that make up the (somewhat arbitrary) number of 32 stitch repertoire in chikan.

orbit of that individual. Enveloped in movement are the expectations the women have regarding their ability to move from place to place. Places may be categorized accordingly to allow or disallow movement, although these are not strictly followed or applied. Movement also speaks to the different atmosphere, milieu, or as my teacher Rehana referred to it, *maahaul*s, of family, community, religion, and labor, among other social and cultural spheres of life. Maahaul is an Urdu word typically referring to the "environment" of a given place. My experience and interpretation of this word when my Rehana used it, goes beyond this translation to encompass a sense of alignment, turning, attuning, "orientation" (Ahmed 2006), or "being-toward-the-world" (Merleau-Ponty 2002). These are bodily sensings or adjustments to a maahaul, atmosphere, milieu, or, as I refer to it throughout this dissertation, *environ(s)*. This embodied experience is closely tied to the way they view certain places, what activity happens there, and how this is, in part, structured by various overlapping environmental circles. The way women talk about their movement, particularly in relation to chikan embroidery, is one entry point to understand the impact of environs in mobility. According to the community's maahaul of the ladies chatting above, what the missing wife expected was reasonable; however, the maahaul within her family may differ.

This chapter is based on an attention to language and phenomenological attention to movement. By talking about the movement of chikankari workers, my purpose is to address the significance of space, and the things and actions that center places. What makes space flexible as well as poignant? What do the ladies of the Center do to develop and maintain these possibilities? This chapter and those that follow, address both the movement to and from as well as the actual nature of the places they traveled to. The implications for this are to address what embroidery work is to them as well as what it enables (or disables).

I would like to begin with an interaction with a woman, Vanita, not a kaarigar, but a very well-to-do entrepreneur who had long been in the chikankari and zardozi business in Lucknow. Her point-of-view comes from a unique business model in which she did not directly benefit from the profits. The kaarigars were additionally producing for her family (and were paid for that work separately). Because of the exceptional situation of the kaarigars, she wished for me to not include them in my study of those who contributed to the larger market. Her concern was that if we met and I wrote about them, that they would be accounted for in the same way as other chikan kaarigars. They produced items for 5-star hotel boutiques across India as well as small designer orders. I had decided that I did not want to focus on embroiderers who produced for such niche outfits like hers; but she had been in the industry for so long, serving for the National Craft Council, selecting national and state award winners for embroidery, and my discussion with her stayed with me as I embroidered. We spoke in her very comfortable home with chai and tasty snacks to share. Her experience and knowledge were vast, so it was with a bit of disappointment that when I described to her my interest in domestic and home spaces as working spaces of embroiderers, she was noticeably dismayed. "Of course, they work from home but so do many other craft industries. Non-profit organizations get so obsessed with Muslim women being in purdah that they assume that because the chikankari embroiderers work from home, that they were, therefore, unable to be mobile." Vanita then indicated to herself; "Look at me. I am in purdah, and I travel internationally. Kaarigars have been and will always be mobile. They have to be able to move in order to move their products into the market."

Vanita's concern that my study would become yet another to focus on Muslim women's mobility is not unreasonable considering the West's continuing obsession with the Muslim woman's body, what covers it, and where it goes. Questions about women's mobility in a lower-

working class Muslim area of Lucknow is more complex than if they are able to travel beyond home. I agree with Vanita that movement was and has always been important to female kaarigars, which is why I discuss it here. It is also important, however, to make the claim that movement in and around Khadra was a gendered experience. In this chapter I discuss the gendered nature of movement through my own embodied experience along with that of other female kaarigars. My purpose here is not to address if and to what extent female kaarigars are mobile. My interest is rather in how women perceive and go about their own movement, what language they use to describe it, how they create their own possibilities for movement, and their own conception of their embodied embroidery work. What is embroidery? Is it household work, wage labor, timepass, a way to connect to other women or female family? One point I follow throughout the dissertation is how their conceptions of embroidery are related to the spaces they stitch in. These questions are rooted in our shared experience of gendered embodied labor.

The first section of this chapter begins with environs. I argue that for female chikankari workers in Khadra, mobility and travel is linked to an orientation to the maahaul and environs of their mohalla, and thus travel becomes a gendered experience requiring tactical movement for their "out of place" (Douglas 1966) and spatially ill-fitting bodies. To be in an environ is to be oriented to an embodied way of being in space. To be in an environ is to be oriented to it, to be aware at some level of its possibilities, its openings and closures. As an embodied experience, there are expectations of the gendered body and that the gendered body makes of the environ in return. In order to maintain, adjust, and expand their mobility within the environ, *tactical cutting*, as influenced by de Certeau's "tactics", "strategies", and "making do", is employed. Tactical cutting refers to conscious choices, indicating an agency over how to make motility, meaning the possibility of movement, into mobility. I also argue that these cuts are in direct response to their

female gendered bodies as being identified, by men as well as themselves, as being "matter out of place" (Douglas 1966), or "space invaders" (Puwar 2002). Where I diverge from Douglas and Puwar, however, is what the ladies actually require. Puwar, for example, follows women who must work in the 'old boys' club' and men's locker room-type of environment of British Parliament. The chikankari workers' needs are to travel, to cut across space and time in as *comfortable* a way as possible (i.e physically as well as drawing the least attention). The language the ladies use about their own movement, conceptions of space, and connections to labor drive this conversation.

I then look into the opposite side of any discussion of mobility and movement – restrictions (*paabandi*) – and specific examples of tactical movement necessary for continued travel. The variety of and reasons for restrictions on women's movement are plentiful and I address some of those here. Restrictions stem from temporal and historical conditions to gender, and to the situational (i.e., weather or over-crowding). In this chapter, my interest in restriction is two-fold. First, I will look into the, what I refer to as, "shock" to women who expect movement, but which is often (but still infrequent enough to expect more) curtailed by bored, unemployed husbands, brothers, fathers, and sons. These restrictions on their movement can be last minute, and are often to the detriment of the financial stability of the family. They were shocking, frustrating, and a source of *tenshan* (more about this term in the following chapter). The second aspect of restriction is closely related to the first: how do women manage restrictions through a set of tactical movements, or tactical cuts? One of these I refer to as "gali-cutting." Another is different modes of transportation. These are ways of "making do". Tactical movement was a general state of travel not restricted to one gender. It does, however, manifest itself differently depending on the body (gendered, classed, racialized, religious-marked, caste) that is doing the

moving. For example, women more often shifted the way they moved to make up for changing conditions. These tactics are what keep them moving.

To write about the mobility and movement of these women is a complicated task. While interacting with middle- and upper-class women in India, there is the inclination to make comparisons and pass judgement on the range of spatial access available to women. This is a problem when speaking to many Western-trained feminists, located both in the subcontinent and in the West, who carry with them second- and third-wave feminist views and see the extent of mobility available to women as a key signifier of their status in society. While the ability to move and travel is an important factor in understanding women's place, to place one's expectation of how women ought to move on other women is not a productive line of analysis. This is a reminder of scholars such as Chandra Mohanty, Kamala Visweswaran, and the contributors to Ruth Behar and Dorothy Gordon's volume, *Women Writing Culture*, that there cannot be one line of feminist thinking to account for the experiences of women and other non-heteronormative identifying individuals across the world. As a scholar trained in Western feminist traditions, I have to keep myself in check (and often fail at this) in my assumptions about mobility and women's needs. It was hard not to try and convince my teacher, Rehana, that she should take advantage of opportunities that took her more outside of the home, across the city, where her efforts would be better remunerated. To spend energy on such judgements is futile. Western feminism often underestimates the widely differing lives women have and assume that all women face similar restrictions that are easily dealt with through the removal of purdah and/or Islam, something Vanita, a veteran of chikan, felt was based on a historical lack of understanding of real women's lives. While the maahaul and environs of a particular area may influence all the women there, the results vary and often say more about the woman's family,

background, and marital status than just the community. Women in Khadra are often "restricted" in their movements and actions, and yet they are also kaarigars, and therefore mobile, but the manner of that mobility is what I am interested in. Tactics are employed to manage their movement, used at times as excuses to go, as well as to stay. I was able to witness some of these tactics and then integrate them into my daily travel.

Travel to the Center

To get to the Center, I walked to the main road leading from Vikas Nagar into Gol Market and Nishat Ganj. The main road had dozens of shared autos going all the way to Charbagh and e-rickshaws going just up to Nishat Ganj where the Vikrams stood. You never had to worry about there being Vikrams, but rather that the Vikram would be empty of other passengers, ensuring a long wait time to depart. This was only an issue at the departing stop. Passengers in the early hours consisted of men and women on their way to work. Families with young children did not come out to ride until later in the day or on the weekends for shopping trips. If there were children, they were usually stuffed into every available crevice or lap and would not be allowed to have a seat.

After getting into a Vikram and waiting for the requisite number of passengers, we were off. It was a pleasant 15-minute ride, primarily with people headed into work. After a certain period, most of the regular morning Vikram drivers knew me and where I stopped: Panna Lal Road, Daliganj. This Vikram would not take me all the way to Khadra, but rather across the bridge to Chowk. There were two ways to get to Khadra. One being to take this Vikram to across the bridge. Catching another Vikram from just across the bridge that passes through Khadra. This was the more expensive (3 extra rupees), time-consuming, and circuitous route. Tahira taught me the cheaper route by way of Panna Lal Road.

To get from Panna Lal Road in Daliganj into Khadra involved a walk through one particularly long gali. The beginning of it seemed to be composed of primarily homes with Hindu families. There were many more small *mandir*s (temples) set up along the way with no *masjids* (mosques) that I saw. During Holi, this side of the gali was streaked with color, on the ground, houses, cows, dogs, and shops. Fewer men wearing *topis* (skullcaps) wandered this side. This all changed after crossing under the railroad tracks indicating a cross over into Khadra, and

the Muslim side of the gali. Under the tracks was also an unfortunate dumping ground for garbage. The waste had eaten into the cement, creating mini lakes of slush. Everyone who crossed this area would speed-walk, mouth covered with a dupatta or *romaal* (handkerchief), taking care so as to avoid the menagerie of hungry cows, hogs, dogs, and rats.[19] On the other side of this was a slum with tin- and plastic-roofed residences. Goats walked around or were tied up near residences.[20] The space on this side of the bridge opened up a bit more to a slightly wider road with an increase in Muslim-owned shops selling kites, kebabs, biryani, ribbon and sewing supplies, halal meat. There are a few *madrasas* (Islamic schools) and masjids along the way as well. To get to the center I turn down an unassuming gali to the right. If I were to go left, I would eventually get to a girl's college where a number of the girls in the mohalla went if their families could afford it or could make it a priority. [21]

Beenish's maahaul

The experiences I had while moving with Rehana are central to my focus on bodily comportment. It also indicates my body's complicity in different sorts of labor taken up by Rehana and the other women. My body rebelled in ways that I expected (and will address more in the next two chapters), but the most prominent was the strain and the pain I felt in the depths (that I did not even know existed) of my eyeballs and sockets. Eye *dard* (pain) was the most common complaint shared during our, what I like to think of as, *gapshap* (gossip, chat) sessions.

Beenish lived in a narrow and vertical *pakka* house made of brick. From what I could see, there were at least three floors, with a narrow set of stairs. Her family living in the house

[19] This scene changed greatly six months after my departure when I returned. The entire under-tracks area had been cleaned out and a newly cemented road, covering the multiple potholes and lakes. The walls had messages painted in blue for the old residents who might resort to dumping their trash, take a moment to relieve their bladder facing the wall, or simply walk around without clothes (something I never saw during my time there): "नेकी की दीवार: कपडो की ज़रूरत हो यहां से ले जा" or "पेशाब करना मना है"

[20] This matter of animals, particularly goats, was something I asked an informant about. I was visiting a chikankari's home in a different part of Khadra and her sister-in-law, also an embroiderer, told me that I should go upstairs on the roof to play with their new baby goat, Rubi.

[21] The ability to attend school regularly enough to eventually attend a women's college seems to have been something that was possible a few years earlier, before the downturn in the zardozi industry. Rehana appi pointed out to me that I would see a lot of young school-aged girls wandering around during the day, not in school. This, she explained, was due to the zardozi downturn. Families could no longer afford to send their daughters to school. Families would have to choose to send sons over their daughters to be educated, as was the case in her family.

comprised of one older sister with mental illness[22], one younger sister (about 14 years old), Beenish (21 years old), and two married brothers, (one of which lived in the house), and a little boy who I think was a nephew. Her mother was there and nearly blind due to cataracts from years of chikankari work. She now wears glasses thicker than I have ever seen. Her father, a much beloved figure in the family, passed away a few years prior, and the sting of his death was still present. He placed a great deal of importance on the education of everyone in the family, especially his daughters. The family relied primarily on two married brothers' incomes, one as a tailor and the other, an under-employed zardozi kaarigar. The money Beenish made through chikan, tailoring, and tutoring went to her studies and her own savings. She was at an age that marriage was present in people's minds, and this was reflected in the conversations that happened at the Center when she was not present. If she was inexplicably absent, Shabana and Shamim wondered if a suitor was visiting the house. Due to her beauty, fair skin, age (early 20s), and education, she was considered to have good prospects for marriage. However, I found that most women at Beenish's age were more vocally resistant against marriage,[23] and parents were increasingly convinced that waiting to marry was best, if they could afford it. From my experience with women around Beenish's age, movement was usually acceptable especially if it was related to education (i.e., traveling to take tuitions or to attend uni-sex schools and colleges). For these women, education could overpower whatever importance is typically given to age.

[22] Of the dozen or so families I spent time with, three of them had children or young adults who had some form of mental illness. The adults in the family pointed this out to me as a way to show how their troubles are exponentially increased by the care required for those family members. None of the households had income to spend for additional help, be that for household work or medical care. The responsibility for those individuals usually came to the woman. For example, Khala had a daughter and son. Her daughter had a severe curving of the spine which meant she could not walk or do most things on her own. Khala said she was very smart and was an artist (I saw a few of her sketches and paintings), but because of her mobility issues, she couldn't go to school. The son was, I am told, about 30, but was not a financial contributor to the house. One day Khala indicated that he had a disability and that she was forced to remain at home to care for both children. This kept her from doing what other national award winners do which is travel to shows and exhibits to display her work (and make money).

[23] I had a few conversations about marriage with Beenish. She was staunchly against it and wished that she could avoid it for the rest of her life. She wasn't specific about her reasons but said that it seemed terrible, and she wanted nothing to do with the practice.

This particular generation has also been witness to their parents' generation which, on the whole, married young. Rehana married around 16 years of age to a man who, it appeared to me, was at least 10 years older. For parents of daughters, this was something they did not want their children to have to go through. They related much of the abuse they experienced to the young age they were forced to marry. Shabana and Rehana stated more than once that marriage at a younger age had destroyed their prospects for a better life and access to education. For Beenish, the entire institution of marriage was at fault for the problems between married people. She told me she had no desire to marry.

Sometime in December, some of the ladies from the Center expressed an interest in meeting a friend of mine who might be able to get them prescription glasses made for a price on par with what they could afford(ish). However, the more I tried to set an actual day for all of us to go, the less commitment I was able to elicit from them. The plan crumbled when Beenish stated that she would not be able to go, regardless of the ongoing dard in her eyes. This was especially upsetting because Beenish struggled with eye dard regularly. Her eyes would be red from strain and rubbing (and lack of appropriate lighting). Some days it would be so bad that she would cut down her workdays to half time or stay home from work entirely.

This, the denial to leave Khadra, happened more than once. Beenish would show interest in a potential outing, and then later, smiling, would shake her head saying she could not go. When I pressed her each time – if it was due to her schedule or the distance – she would smile and shake her head. She would not respond with any particular concern. It frustrated me because she seemed to think that such visits would be beneficial for her eyes and work, but when it came to fixing a day and time, she would placidly refuse. After spending every day of every week for the first half of my ten months of fieldwork at the Center, I became aware of the particular aches

and pains I suffered from and those of the individual women. Sharing these pains, built up the relationships between women who spent a good deal of their time together playfully and not-so-playfully insulting one another.

When she had left for the day, I turned to Rehana for more information. Beenish had an extremely busy schedule. Every day she came to the center at 9:30am, nearly an hour before the others. She left early around 3pm to meet with different teachers in Khadra to take "tuitions" (tutorials) in various subjects like Urdu, Computer, Maths, and English. The goal with such tuitions was to receive a certificate claiming that she was qualified to teach in certain areas. She then returned home where she gave hour-long tuitions to neighborhood children, about 6 or 7 years old, for about 200 rupees per child per month. She and her sister would also cook dinner, clean the house, do schoolwork, do bits of embroidery work for the center (and sometime for herself), and sometimes tailored women's clothes. I asked Rehana why it was so difficult for Beenish to hop over to Aminabad for glasses, especially when she needed them, but it was acceptable for her to leave the house for tuitions and work at the center. Her response: "To go out of the house and area without marriage: *Maahaul ki baat hoti hai*." It's a matter of the '*environs*.'

Fitting in the environs

Environs, as I define them, are spatial and geographic as well as atmospheric; something in the air. Its contents are multiple and varied. I refer to these contents simply as 'layers'. Layers make up an environ: gender, religion, region, class, caste, marital status. To be in them is an embodied experience. Environs also have the capability of layering over one another, of overlapping: family, work, mohalla, congregation. Within such environs the expectations of how bodies behave depend on the layers that make them up. It may be safe to say that gatherings of

people create environs that overlap and compete, and the layers that make them up are those certain aspects (which are in and of themselves social and cultural) that make us members of society. To identify with specific environs is to, in a sense, fit (or mis-fit) into society. To fit into society is an embodied experience; meaning, how our bodies exist and map in- and on-to society, differs based on the body, the environs, and its layers. All of this is not to say that the fits are perfect like puzzle pieces – that these processes are ordained and then followed, that there is no struggle to resist, or that there is no organic (or forced) shifting and changing. Individuals have the power to shift gradually or monumentally the environs that influence them. The environs I glimpsed as I moved around, worked, and listened to the Center ladies are the following: Center, family/home, Khadra, kaarigar, and the immediate mohalla behind the College.

Rehana's employment of the Urdu term 'maahaul' is what pushes this section and chapter about my concept of 'environs.' A few literal translations of the Urdu term "maahaul" include such amorphous descriptors as "environs," "environment," "milieu," "atmosphere," "ambience," "surroundings," and "situation." Simply by searching for interpretations of the word, substantive engagement in an online forum indicate that the definition may be all but fixed.[24] Not to belabor the form of the Urdu term too much, the two Arabic roots of "*ma*" and "*haul*" refer to what is "around" or "nearby." This awareness of what there is at present in the surroundings implies a certain temporality in the term. It is concerned with something that exists at the moment of investigation. I am concerned with an environ that has the capability to affect the future, and to explain past and present actions.

[24] Wolverine9 post to "Urdu: maahaul," *WordReference.com: Language Forums*. January 11, 2013., https://forum.wordreference.com/threads/urdu-maahaul.2558554/
Omlick post to "Urdu: ماحول "maahaul," *WordReference.com: Language Forums*. January 12, 2010., https://forum.wordreference.com/threads/urdu-%D9%85%D8%A7%D8%AD%D9%88%D9%84-maahaul.1685119/

While my use of 'environ' certainly pulls from these various concepts, I am pushing forward a lived engagement with the term based on a specific moment with specific people (Rehana, Beenish, and myself). I distinguish between these two terms – 'maahaul' as people employ it in their everyday conversation in reference to the definitions above, and 'environ' as a theoretical device I use to consider an embodied spatial experience within and beyond its immediate geographic area. My experience of the word 'maahaul' in Khadra and other similar kaarigar circles was that it was not used often, at least not that I was aware of or in the types of conversations I had. In other social circles, particularly Urdu literary circles I became acquainted with through my academic and linguistic networks, 'maahaul' was used often. It was something present in literary gatherings, be they *mushaira*s or *qawwali* performances. It was a sense of the embodied literary culture that came with being in the presence of others who experienced Urdu in a lived sense. That same sense of awareness or orientation is what Rehana communicated about the maahaul in the mohalla.

Rehana's statement, "*Maahaul ki baat hoti hai*" communicates a few important issues. First, a comment on the grammatical construction of the sentence; the maahaul she points to is a habitual one. The verb *'hona'* in its form here ('*hoti hai*') conveys the present habitual tense. It is one that is constantly present, and it is this that is at fault for certain things; in this case, the motility of women like Beenish. Second, maahaul in this instance is clearly Rehana's way of pointing to forces beyond the demands made by one's family. While her family may have had a conversation with her about where she can move, it can also be an effective communicator making the need for such an encounter potentially superfluous. A third note is that Rehana's maahaul makes both men and women complicit in the restriction and allowance of mobility. While women often made men the butt of the jokes and identified them as the source of many of

their woes and frustrations, men were not the sole actors in the establishment or compliance with the maahaul.[25] Some of this came from women policing other women at the Center. What is not clear is if Rehana is talking about the maahaul, or environs, of the mohalla, the Center, or that of her family unit. Of the women I spent time with, their movements were policed and tracked by each other, their families, and others in the mohalla. Each one perceived the other differently based on that movement, quality of chikan work, and sartorial comportment. Each had to work within a different set of expectations according to the maahaul. Each of the local consequences that account for the maahaul, lead, in turn, to a broader need to inspect the environs. Moment like this made me distinctly aware of both concepts and how they influenced the mobility and motility of the Center ladies.

Bodies are vital to the population (that is, bodies filling space) and maintenance of existing environs. The difference between bodies in environs and bodies in place is a spatially atmospheric question. It is not architectural. Bodies may populate an environ without physically congregating together in a place. Their physical attributes and social designations related to those attributes are important to how different bodies are affected by and how they interpret any environ. In the case of this dissertation, I saw gender to be the most apparent, as well as difficult layer to manage. It was taxing to be identified as a woman. The ladies in this dissertation were doubly marked as Muslim through sartorial acts like covering their heads, wearing a *ta'veez* (amulet),[26] or wearing a *niqaab* to travel outdoors. This includes the lack of sartorial statements,

[25] This co-authorship of the patriarchy has been well documented and analyzed in different regions of the world. One of the most significant studies is Deniz Kandiyoti's *Bargaining with the Patriarchy*.
[26] Ta'veez are amulets traditionally worn on some part of the bodies, usually around the neck or wrist. They contain prayers (du'a) that are meant to protect the wearer.

such as wearing *sindoor*, *mangalsutra*, or sari.[27] This and other gendered embodied differences impact the way they move throughout space within various environs.

One way of thinking about women's bodies and movement is to contemplate it as bringing with it its own sense of place to any space. This relationship is best explicated by Puwar, who expands on Lefebvre here:

> The proxemics of bodies and space means that 'each living body is space and has its space: it produces itself in space and it also produces that space'[Lefebvre]. Bodies do not simply move through spaces but constitute and are constituted by them. Thus it is possible to see how both the space and the normative bodies of a specific space can be disturbed by the arrival of Black and Asian bodies in occupations which are not historically or conceptually marked out as their 'natural' domain (Puwar 2004, 33).[28]

The development and maintenance of this 'natural domain' turns out to require constant mediation and labor. Bodies and their individual spaces represent a certain reality that in turn influences the space around them (Ahmed 2006; McDowell 1999). A body in a certain domain may expect that place to be populated by similarly marked bodies which all have their own space. Places tend to have a homogenizing effect and affect. Places make bodies inclined to assimilate in ways it may not otherwise do so when in other places. Bodies in this situation depend on the same external physical markings to identify with. These marked bodies assume that the place will be populated by them and will therefore be undisturbed. When bodies that do not align are present, those who do align may see them as "space invaders" (Puwar 2004).

---

[27] This is not to say that no Muslims wear saris. My host mother, Najma, wore a sari for most of her marriage in part to please her Hindu in-laws. However, the fact that she mentioned this to me (as well as my own visual awareness of sartorial decisions in Lucknow) was some evidence that Muslim women in Lucknow typically did not wear saris. I saw very few Muslim women in Khadra wearing saris. A friend from a Hindu background once pointed out how much she liked the kaarigari of Lucknow but feared that her family would see anything she purchased from Lucknow as coming from a Muslim aesthetic.

[28] In this quotation, Puwar references Lefebvre. Puwar, Nirmal. *Space Invaders: Race, Gender and Bodies Out of Place*. New York: Berg Publishers, 2004, p. 33. The Whitford citation is for the following publication: Whitford, Margaret ed. *The Irigaray Reader: Luce Irigaray*. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1991.

Gender is one such marker that may indicate a body that disturbs space. If bodies are places (McDowell 1997; Massey 1994), then the gendered body too may be a place in space. Puwar refers to the geographer Luce Irigaray who sees the female gendered body as such: "Woman is a place, that is, as Luce Irigaray puts it, 'from whence the "subject" continues to draw his reserves, his re-sources, yet [is] unable to recognise them/her' (cited in Whitford 1991:53)…[Woman is] a container, an envelope" (Puwar, 16). McDowell and Massey have both attempted to extend the definition of "place" as geographically unbounded and more representing a network of relationships. "I [McDowell] have conceptualized place as constituted by sets of relations which cut across spatial scales; but in order to analyse these interconnections there must be a local or locality focus" (McDowell, 29). If "woman" is a category built through an understanding of how relationships work in a heteronormative organization of gender, then "woman" could be an unbounded spatially geographic concept, oriented to an environ.

To move through space is also to move with others. There are firm rules to movement within a given environ. This is the atmospheric, airy-ness of it. Movement was negotiable. Who could go where, at what time, with whom, for how long were based on multiple factors, some of those being the expectations of a separate but overlapping environ. The environ Rehana describes is one that is flexible and open to possible movement in some ways, and not for others. For most of the women I met, movement with other women, even if just with one companion, greatly increased the chances of permission to travel. However, for younger women, this was typically true for female family members, not just anyone. For Beenish, it was not necessarily a a useful thing to travel with all of us together. She knew it would not be acceptable movement. In another case of travel, this time to Kadhai Ghar in Charbagh, Rehana and Shabana were able to convince their families (Rehana's husband and Shabana's brother) because we were all traveling

together, and Rehana's husband would drive us back to Khadra. Rehana and I traveled relatively easily together; although, we constantly had to be aware of time. Her husband or her young teenage daughters were constant reminders. The presence of like bodies together was what enabled so many women to converge on the Center, or any chikan embroidery domestic space.

'Environ' is a describer of what space, place, and its contents are doing, feeling, and allowing. It creates possibilities in space. It opens and closes space to possibilities. The space can order the environ, and the environ can order the space. Because space evolves depending on what populates it, both the space and environs are mutable. The flexibility of environs also indicates ambiguity. Laura Ring speaks directly to the opening and closing of space in her book with regards to the emotional labor invested by women to maintain a tension-filled peace in her multi-ethnic apartment building in Karachi, Pakistan. She addresses the physical opening and closing of doors to certain interactions, as well as the impact of certain gendered bodies in those spaces:

> From the time men left in the morning until their return for lunch, it was not at all uncommon to see all the outer doors of the flats on one's floor slung open, with just the screen door separating the private space of individual residences from the semipublic space of the hallway. In fact, I quickly came to view a closed door as a signal that men were home and that I (or other visitors) should take care before entering. It was at these times, when doors lay open, that the connection and exchange between women neighbors was at its height (Ring 2006, 44-5).

Ring's engagement with space here is physical and symbolic. The doors provide a very concrete indication of what can no longer transpire. That the doors are hinged also provides the opportunity for that space to change. Doors can open and remain open. The environs here may switch between one that allows for female bodies to visit one another, to one that enforces stricter rules and gatekeeping. The environs of individual homes I visit in Lucknow could change suddenly and without warning. Women had to be savvy and cognizant of such changes so as not

to upset the balance within the family and community, or to endanger future mobility to places like the Center.

To attempt to flush out the relationship between space, place, and environs, I turn briefly to feminist geographers Linda McDowell and Doreen Massey. Their work points to the significance of region and locality in understanding the affectivity of place, especially as it relates to how gender gets constructed in different ways. Massey states that "The view of place advocated [for]…where localities can in a sense be present in one another, both inside and outside at the same time, is a view which stresses the construction of specificity through interrelations rather than through the imposition of boundaries and the counterposition of one identity against another"(Massey 1994, 7). While I acknowledge the significance of interrelations to the creation of place and localities, I see environ as something that is conveyed in the air. It is manipulatable. It is an aspect of place in that it adds to one's understanding of place. Space is full of these matrixes of relationships that create places everywhere, allowing place-making and world-making to occur constantly as bodies move in and out of view, creating with them their own sense of place and their own orientation to their environ.

To be influenced by an environ means that there is an orientation to that environ, an awareness to it, and a care for what it prescribes. Sara Ahmed makes use of the term "orientation" in *Queer Phenomenology* to explore the lived spatiality of sexuality. She discusses the body in spaces, the things that are reachable to it, the shaping of that body by space, and space molding around the body. This relationship means that bodies are able to move to certain places in certain ways due to the orientation towards specific objects. I would like to consider how the concept of environ fits into this arrangement, perhaps operating as an "orientation device", to use Ahmed's terminology, influencing how Beenish would move about Khadra and

the manner of her movement. To think of environ as an 'orientation device' is somewhat different than how Ahmed uses her example of the writer's desk. The environs describe multiple things and nothing. It is what Rehana sees as the door allowing Beenish to move to her tutorials for Urdu and English, but less so beyond Khadra.

Orientation to an environ implies that the subject interacts with it, extracts from it. Is it a code of ethics (i.e., responsibilities) a set of guidelines for behavior (i.e., expectations) (Gilligan)? Is it a setting or background? How aware are we of an environ on a daily basis? Laura Ring's discussion of an opening and closing of possibilities in space is a part of it. It is not a rule of ethics that emphasizes responsibility, meaning, what or who people are responsible of or for. The women had expectations of how an environ operates. By having expectations of how it operates, the ladies would, ideally, be able to move within it to their own ends. However, environs are flexible and affective by nature. By having expectations, those can be overrun. This is where opening and closing of possibilities comes in. To deal with this, women must manage their expectations of space. Environs are present within society and yet do not always abide by its rules and guidance. Environs may allow more movement or less movement depending on the circumstances. They thrive off of interaction with people that make up society. They are affective and sensorial. Individuals or groups of people may impress upon others the expectations of a given environ. In this sense, they are subject-dependent. They do not rely on others to "uphold" environs because environs are nothing without the people who populate it. There are expectations of how they operate, but that is a relationship, as opposed to an organism exerting pressure onto people.

I describe my attention to these environs and bodies in Khadra as "atmospheric attunements" (Stewart 2001). This is a description method employed in writing to bring attention

to underlying things, or 'some-things.' I experience my field notebook as a tool that better allows me to engage with these 'some-things' as possible parts of a coherent whole or even just bits of things. Stewart states,

> Attending to atmospheric attunements means, instead, chronicling how incommensurate elements hang together in a scene that bodies labor to be in or to get through…An atmosphere is not an inert context but a force field in which people find themselves. It is not an effect of other forces but a lived affect - a capacity to affect and to be affected that pushes a present into composition, an expressivity, the sense of potentiality and event. It is an attunement of the sense, of labors, and imaginaries to potential ways of living in or living through things (Stewart 2001, 452).

To write about spatial aspects of labor, travel, and environ, means to be attuned to subtle decisions and micro somethings. Atmospheric attunements in practice must also result in an awareness of how 'incommensurate elements hang together', but also do not hang together, to not force the things together. In the first chapter, I turn to this concept of environ as something that may allow certain elements to 'hang together.' I find it to be a dynamic concept especially in the practice of attunements because it can bring together seemingly disparate responses. By this I mean that a moment may not seem to play by expectations in a given environ; and yet, the very variability of it means that through the act of attuning one is able to see how seemingly disparate moments 'hang together' to point to that characteristic variability. I also understand attuning to necessitate a certain level of familiarity with the place, community, and persons. In ethnographic practice this means a development in senses, and this is reflected in my notes and interpretations of moments. This chapter (and those that follow) may present a seeming whole, and yet this whole is a collation of moments pointing to a development in my ability to attune. This is especially the case with my awareness of the mental and psychological stresses present in the groups I worked with.

*****

Movement and places in environs: "if the girls should need me"

Movement around the city posed difficulties for most women. Many women I met, chikan worker or not, felt a need to be near their respective home base. Rehana stated that if something should happen, "if the girls should need me," or someone came by the house and she wasn't there, how would it seem? What could she do if she were far away? Her husband was absent most of the time, physically as well as mentally. At least by being at the Center, she could just walk down the gali. I spoke with other family members, men and women, who also impressed upon me the importance of having a woman in or near the house at all times. Convenience was important. Comfort was also a factor. To travel beyond the places spatially associated with their environs could be anxiety inducing. This anxiety related to a number of factors such as age and marital status. For most of them being away related in part to feeling like 'matter out of place' (Douglas 1966; Puwar 2004). Spaces beyond the immediate mohalla, and then further beyond Khadra, are not 'shaped' to women's bodies. Women must navigate and contemplate each space they move in before they move. They do this in a way that men did not.

One powerful example of this is the lack of women's restrooms. Women cannot leave the area for long because of this. It's a problem of *peshaab* (pee).[29] I encountered two women in an '*ittar* (fragrance or perfume) shop in Chowk (the Old City). The area is tightly packed of labyrinthine galis and no public bathrooms (not uncommon). One of them lived in this particular gali. The other woman remarked on her regular visits to use the former's house toilet whenever she visited the area. The two laughed about how awful Chowk is for women. I learned to have a restroom stop in mind for every area I visit in the city. I don't know how other women did it otherwise.

[29] The extent to which women's mobility has been restricted due to the lack of restrooms is no secret and has even become the subject of Bollywood films. However, what is still lacking is a scholarly engagement with these moments. With the exception of a few articles, the extent of the problem is underdocumented.

*****

Movement relates to environs. They impact movement. They affect how we think about movement and the places we are able to move to. In the case of this dissertation, the centrality of the domestic space in women's lives and their movements makes it an important element in every environ the ladies are a part of, with the house often taking a different role in each. It is central to their movement every day. The fact that embroidery work takes place most often in domestic spaces, be it their own homes or the homes of others such as Khala's Center, greatly influences the value they and others give to their work. This is not new information, and others have addressed it with regards to different trades.[30] My interest here is in the unique status that work-affiliated domestic spaces hold for women in enabling them to move and the status of their labor in places such as centers versus in one's own home. Most of the ladies in the Center, especially Khala, viewed women producing chikan at home as opposed to the Center as producing inferior chikan. However, the ability to move freely between their home and Khala's Center was due to the very fact of it being someone's home. As Tahira said, "Well, it's a home/house, right?" (*Ek ghar to hai na*?) I was curious about her mother's strictness regarding her movement in and beyond Khadra but relative ease when it came to travel to the Center. Seeing the Center as a home increased accessibility. The opening scene of this chapter from my field notes illustrates this.

Regardless of the space where work happens, in kaarigar circles, both men and women use the Hindi/Urdu word for work or labor, "*kaam*", regardless of the wage – high, low, none. To do work is "*kaam karna*." The word for 'hard work', "*mehnat*", was rarely used by women.

[30] Mies, Maria. *The Lace Makers of Narsapur: Indian Housewives Produce for the World Market*. London: Zed Press, 1982. Wilkinson-Weber, Clare M. *Embroidering Lives: Women's Work and Skill in the Lucknow Embroidery Industry*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999.

There were a few instances when they used it to emphasize that chikankari was, in fact, "*mehnat*", and not work done just for the sake of timepass (Jeffrey 2010). While in Lucknow, I spent some of my time with male zardozi workers. This allowed me to see how different kaarigars viewed their work, moved through space, and hear the language they used. The men were more likely to refer to their work as hand-work or craft-work, or "*kaarigari*". I heard Shabana call Rehana a kaarigar once, and it was tongue-in-cheek, a bit sarcastic. There is a certain prestige and pride that comes with the term that women did not associate with theirs. Kaarigari requires training, an *ustaad* (a teacher or mentor), and a separate space (a *kaarkhana*, or workshop) to work. Even though men in zardozi typically learn from a community of embroiderers at or near home as women do, they still identify one person as their primary ustaad.

Most zardozi workers tied their ustaad to their identity as a kaarigar. Even if that person was just a male family member who allowed them to sit at the *adda* and fiddle around on the edge of the cloth. That was partly how I learned zardozi. That person stuck clear in their minds as the most formative person in their training. Most embroidery kaarigars learned from multiple people over many years. The most senior person who took them under their care was who they identified as their ustaad. There was a love and respect for this person. However, the relationship between them was different than that between a female chikan kaarigar and her trainers. The term ustaad was very rarely used. When I asked Shabana who taught (*sikhaana*) her, she responded that a few women in the household along with some neighborhood women taught her bits here and there. But, she said, no one single person taught her. She learned (*seekhna*) by watching (*dekhna*), doing (*karna*), and repeating (*do barah karna*, *dohraai karna*). Most identified specific women – like their mothers, aunts, cousins, or the local State Award winner – as contributors. These relationships and the lessons of embroidery equaled more than the sum of

stitches taught. This is one of the more complex aspects of chikan; the emotional connection women had with their teachers, and, at times, particular stitches associated with them. For example, Rehana's mother taught her how to make jaali; and a local State Award winner's mother taught her, along with many other poor daughters of the mohalla, the other stitches of the chikan repertoire. My long-time now-deceased host mother, Najma, was of the *shareef* class[31] and also reminisced with me about her aunt on her mother's side who taught her how to embroider. She was one of the younger sisters and was thus surrounded by older female companions. Indeed, wherever I went, if I brought out my frame, random women (and sometimes men) often approached me to tell me about female family members who excelled at handwork. This emotional and nostalgic element of embroidery – perhaps mentioning the person who taught them a particular stitch, discussing the joy of doing it well, making plans for future personal projects, or remembering items made just for them – complicated the environs (familial and communal) that tended to de-value chikankari labor, be that through a paltry wage, comments that it is lesser than other male-dominated forms of embroidery (i.e., zardozi), implying the time spent is only for timepass, or that the wages earned were not for "necessary" purchases (i.e., education-related expenses).

When I insisted on calling Rehana my 'ustaad', she was pleased in a way that betrayed the complex way women think about teaching and learning from each other. She acted as if it were an unusual novelty, but that I was perhaps being overly generous. I still do not know what I think about the title considering the sense of familiarity women felt with each other as teachers and the formality implicit in calling someone your ustaad. This familiarity existed between kaarigars of male-dominated trades like zardozi, however this was less so with one's ustaad.

[31] The literal definition of shareef, or sharif, could be "noble", "eminent", or "exalted", however, when used to identify the social class, it refers to an upper-, educated- Muslim class located primarily in North India, particularly from the mid- to late nineteenth century until Partition in 1947.

Such titles were earned, and I wondered if the zardozi workers who spoke disparagingly of chikan kaarigars viewed women as unworthy of it.[32]

Space is related to these questions of value and gender. Most women did not go to a "center". Men, on the other hand, always referred to the space where they did zardozi work (where their tools, the adda, or wooden frame, is placed) as the "kaarkhaana." The two words that best describe kaarkhaana are, depending on the situation, "factory" or "workshop." The problem I have with these two translations for a zardozi workspace is that they imply a (at least semi-) structured setting with an overseer or a gild or a group of laborers working together. The kaarkhaana was often just a room barely large enough to squeeze in an adda (large or small) and men seated around it. Men worked together or alone. Sometimes the room was located in their home, someone else's home, or a rented space just down the street. They were just as variable as the domestic embroidery situations women work in. What differs, however, is the presence of the adda. It is comprised of four beams of wood with holes used to stretch the fabric apart, and a stool or prop at either end to lift it up from the ground. They are usually quite large and difficult to move, especially when kaarigars have already threaded and stretched the cloth (typically for saris) onto the frame. It takes more than one kaarigar to prepare the cloth for work. Zardozi workers viewed the kaarkhaana as a separate space that one needed to travel to in order to work. This mentality was not pervasive amongst chikan kaarigars since most worked from home. The Center, however, allowed the ladies to experience this separation. It also allowed them to view their work as higher quality than that done by women from home. The problem with working at home, they said, was that there was always someone ready to interrupt you. The quality of work suffered because of this. You could never just sit down and work in peace. You also could not

[32] I specify this as a potential issue of gender because I was unable to compare the rhetoric surrounding male chikankari artisans. When older male zardozi kaarigars or even female kaarigars discussed them, they were always referred to as master craftsmen. When they passed, so did their skills.

guarantee the stable space of a center that allowed separation between the work and potential spills or accidents. At Rehana's home, the stitching area was also the sleeping and eating area. The Center provided that stable, separate space. They could work from a home, not necessarily their own. This is not to say that we were never interrupted. The next two chapters in this dissertation discuss those interruptions. However, the separateness of the Center from one's home and the ability to move there, provided something of a respite from housework for embroidery work.

*****

Orientation to an environ affects how we view ourselves in relation to others. This is the process through which we view ourselves and others view us, particularly keeping the layers that make up bodies. I'd like to highlight a few layers – gender, workplace, class – to examine how they interact with and impact the relation chikan kaarigars have with the products of their labor. They are not typically consumers of their own work. I rarely saw any of them wear it with the exception of Kadhai Ghar and related chikankari atelier located in Charbagh. Occasionally women had handkerchiefs they or another family member embroidered with care or made up something for a young child. These were carefully saved and kept as mementos of the person who made it or its intended recipient. But they rarely wore chikan with any sense of pride in what they made. In a recent Facebook post on an atelier's profile, one worker is depicted wearing a loose blouse and trousers, both with delicate work she made. I paraphrase her quote: "I never thought to wear these types of clothes [i.e., produced for wealthy upper-class women] and was surprised to find that I looked good." Her perception of her work, which I argue can be easily extended to most chikan kaarigars, was, on the one hand, that this level of embroidery should be worn by a class she did not see herself as a part of. This was largely in part due to the expense.

Every kaarigar in the Center knew that their work was worth thousands of rupees. Beenish told me that only rich (*ameer*) women like movie and TV stars could afford to wear these chikan-encrusted garments. On the other hand, the perceived value of their work in the market did not carry over to their labor value or to the internal communal value of the embroidery as a skill itself. There is a transformation that the chikan garment goes through, a fetishization, that turns the cloth with lower working-class women's embroidery into a delicate garment worthy only of upper class, wealthy women's bodies. The complex intersections of class, labor, and embroidery swirled around in the environments of all embroidery kaarigars, but women were particularly affected.

By staying in Khadra in centers and homes, chikan kaarigars interacted infrequently with upper class women, foreign and Indian, during the process of placing an order. Consumers preferred to go to the storefronts where it was easier to purchase what was already made. However, for those willing to travel to Khadra to order for their own business or consumption, they carefully followed Khala's husband's directions through the galis and to the Center. Sometimes they sent a nephew to the College, and he then brought by motorbike to the Center. When women from outside of Khadra and Lucknow came to place orders, both groups of women were made aware of their classed positionality in relation to the other. On one occasion, a woman from Bangalore visited. She had a long conversation with Khala to look at the quality of work, place an order, and then briefly popped her head in to look at us sprawled out on the floor working, made a brief and somewhat embarrassed smile, and left without a word. Everyone looked at each other, smirked, and snickered a bit awkwardly. Shabana said, "Every time someone comes to visit like that, Khala likes to show them where we work. Sometimes they come in to ask us questions or look at our work, but other times, they just pop in, look at us, and

leave." Based on the way the ladies talked about it, they were aware they were being put on display. The only way they could respond or take part in this uneven encounter was to reclaim that moment after the person left through their acknowledgement of the awkwardness of their position. On this particular occasion, Khala made some comments about the monthly wage, verbally tacking on an additional 1,000 to what most of them actually get (3,500 INR/month). The women grumbled about this later. It was being here, in Khala's home, which is also the Center, that gave them comfort and some distance away from their own domestic spaces. However, to then have that space invaded by a very differently classed body created a strange sensation in the air, a certain self-awareness of their lower-class position even in their own space.

When I first joined the Center, I felt this sensation. The best way I can explain this is through Beenish's words when I visited her house for the first time. When I arrived at the house, the brothers were away at the kaarkhaana. Her sisters and mother were at home. We sat on the bed on the ground floor and Beenish smiled nervously. She said it was weird to see me here in her house and that she did not feel good about it. The house is so small, she said, it must be, compared to where you live. She said she felt awkward about me being in a place like this, implying that I must view it as somehow beneath me. I remember spending most of my visit reassuring her of how comfortable and lovely her home was, how tasty the chai, and beautiful the artwork pieces she brought out to show me.

Beenish was one of the women who really enjoyed creating with her hands. She claimed to be at the Center primarily because she wanted to be. Different from the others, she made time to work on her own chikan pieces. When I came back from a block printer with the printing of a majestic peacock, she requested that I take some white cloth for a kurta for herself and get the peacock printed on the front and back. As for visiting people at home, it was only Rehana who

really got used to me being in her home (I visited a lot) and eventually felt comfortable and less insecure about me being there.

My presence in the Center influenced the environment of the Center. I was a constant source of fodder for comments about expectations of gender, class, and race. These always revealed and reminded me of my place in the group. I wouldn't say that the impact of my body ever lessened, but rather that its acceptance into the space made it change from one entity to another. The environs I occupied were not ones that impacted my day-to-day movements with regards to restrictions. The environment did impact my movements as I integrated certain patterns and tactical cuts. And yet my body as a female gendered one was not placed in space to make the same decisions as someone such as Beenish. As time passed, my presence was accepted but I was always aware of what my body represented and how ladies interpreted my own layers in relation to their various environs.

As I spent more time in the Center, comments about my skin, hair, class (assumed financial background due to my ability to live in Lucknow without "working"), and marital status were never off limits. More disturbing comments focused on the idea that my fair, white (*gauri*) hands compared to their black (*kaala*) hands made cleaner embroidery, keeping the fabric clean, bright/pure, and white (*saaf*, *paak*, *safed*), while their hands made the fabric discolored and dirty. The understanding of their class compared to their understanding of mine was that something dirty rubbed off of their bodies, no matter how hard they tried to keep the fabric (and perhaps by extension anything they touched) clean. For Tahira, I was European. When introducing me to her family, I was the "European ma'am" at the Center. Colorism was a regular source of conversation. Shabana hated to sit on the roof and embroider because she would get black sitting in the sun. One day, someone commented to Beenish about her darkening

complexion (*saanvla*) and she immediately touched her face self-consciously. Shabana commented the most on my skin. My light brown hair, which took on blonde bits from overexposure to the sun and was growing long, was also something Beenish requested that I leave untied as it looked best that way. She said compared my comportment with regards to my hair to the next-door neighbor, a young woman (perhaps around 17) who sat on the roof and "unashamedly" (*be-sharam*) brushed her enviably long, dark tresses. It was acceptable for me to leave my hair untied but not for someone in the same community who should be abiding by the maahaul or environ.

They all regularly implored me to remain unmarried as I was not expected, as they were, to marry and reproduce. "Men are awful." "Men are useless." "Remain single if you can." During one exchange with Beenish, she said she had no wish to marriage, but what choice did she have in the matter. These external markers typical of gender and society did not apply to me and were thus signs of my foreigner status. They were also signs of class and racial expectations. Sometimes, particularly Shabana, would reference them in annoyance or even anger. Pointing out that of course I could have these things – the hair (she pointed out that I probably used shampoo instead of bar soap to wash my hair), the painted nails,[33] the clean white hands – because I did not have to work as they did. I did not have to work within a particular timeframe to make the average monthly wage of 3,500 rupees. I was, after all, doing this out of interest. As Rehana said to people when doing introductions, "*Us ki dilchaspi hai*." She has the interest.

Movement was central to these conversations, particularly for Shabana. Most of the other ladies in the Center had some flexibility with movement. This could be due to grown children who did not require care or others to look after young children, no children (or husband), or

[33] I would occasionally paint my nails. Beenish especially liked to remark on the different colors. I asked her if I should bring some to the Center for her but she it was forbidden (*mana'*). With nail polish, she said, she would not be able to do a complete voozu, or ritual cleansing, before doing namaaz.

some other related reason. Shabana was in a different situation as a divorced woman with a daughter to raise alone. If I left the Center early to go somewhere in the city, she always commented on how wonderful it must be to move about as I please. I received similar feedback from Khala who was tied to the house with two grown, disabled children. Upper class women from across religious communities said also shared their feeling about this. When I was the object of Shabana's anger, I tried not to take it too personally, but her comments stung me often. Some of the women looked at me with pity. But to Shabana, it was personal. These moments, as uncomfortable as they were for me to experience and then sit with afterwards, showed the frayed edges and hoped-for changes to their environs. Following Shabana's comments, she would then sometimes find a way to place her standing in some way above mine, to show that there were other things she valued beyond those seemingly cosmetic but significant (to her) markers of difference.

Anne McClintock's work, *Imperial Leather*, and Mary Douglas's *Purity and Danger* came to my mind during these interactions. As disturbing as it was, my presence, all too frequently considering the number of hours we spent together, made both of us feel as 'matter out of place' to each other. The colonial legacy of cleanliness and dirt were present in these interactions. McClintock's chapter in *Imperial Leather* titled after the book, goes into the S/M relationship between Munby and his wife/servant, Cullwick, centered around the fetish of dirt and the transgression of showcasing it and 'the slave band' as a "forbidden sign of work" (McClintock 1995, 149). Setting the backdrop of Victorian culture, she states, "the iconography of dirt became deeply integrated in the policing transgression of social boundaries…Dirt is what is left over after exchange value has been extracted" (McClintock 1995, 153). Amazingly it is dirt, the 'left over' of labor, that is made to feel as 'matter out of place' even if the place itself is

where dirt accumulates on the body. The legacy of colonial racism was present in the Center and presented itself infrequently, and yet my ability to move within and then outside of environments of expectations brought it into sharp relief and, in the case of Shabana, also brought feelings of frustration and anger. My bodily presence highlighted what Shabana viewed as certain realities of living within her environments that marked her female gendered working body in ways that mine was not. These were the layers of her environs that came out more clearly when bodies that did not bend in the same ways came together in one architectural space such as the Center.

The ladies I embroidered with had certain expectations and hopes for their mobility. Travel to certain places for certain reasons are a part of the environs they inhabit. This is in part related to how the community understood the spatial nature of their endpoints (i.e., another woman's house, therefore a domestic space, or to the block-printer, therefore for embroidery work). However, some of the ease of movement, as I saw it, was in part due to the absence of some male family members. The men tended to care about what was happening in the present. For example, the regular absence of Rehana's husband due to his work or loitering (due to lack of work) allowed her relative freedom to move around often. This came in handy when she needed to call upon her network. The recent decline in Khadra work for Muslim men has led to her husband being increasingly at home. This was not uncommon in the area, that at least one male of the house had difficulty finding employment. Considering my research began after the decline in zardozi work in the area, I am unable to compare this with a picture of the "before time." I am able to say that the intermittent nature of employment of the working class of Khadra Muslim men greatly impacts the movement of women. At least in part because of this shift, women's mobility remains an unstable thing. I am not implying here that women's mobility was stable before the decline in employment opportunities for men, or that women did not deal with

emotional and physical abuse that occurs when men are present more. My point is to indicate that as men were present in the house, these instances of abuse occurred. More research and analysis will be necessary to give a fuller picture of what may cause this.

There are multiple factors that contribute to the mobility of women at any given time and place. My research time overlapped with a number of public movements that hampered everyone's mobility in various ways. One such example is the All-India Citizenship Amendment Act Protests on December 19, 2019. A second is the wave of protests (and violence) against Kashmiris (and Muslims) in response to the suicide bomb attack against a convoy of Indian security personnel in Pulwama, Kashmir on February 14, 2019. The unemployment factor for young men has led to the perceived problem of more young men loitering in public places and therefore harassing young women. I mention these troubles to provide context and to highlight the importance of the current temporal moment. The section that follows addresses some of the restrictions on women's movement in light of these issues and other gender-based factors.

Familial restrictions and emotional labor: is it just the patriarchy?

After I returned to the States in August, I continued to keep in touch with Rehana through WhatsApp. We send each other voice messages about how the other is doing and updates about our activities, as well as photos of our chikan projects. Before I left, I introduced her to a friend who runs Kadhai Ghar. It is located in a beautifully restored historic *haveli*, with open spaces where kaarigars learn from design school graduates and other artists. Rehana visited this place with me and decided that she wanted to attend as a student. I spent a good deal of my time with two classes of students, as a student and a "teacher.[34]" Rehana's skills as an artisan were more

[34] The director saw my experience in the ethnographic field as evidence that I was a capable interviewer. Hilariously, I conducted relatively few interviews during my time. Regardless, he requested that I speak to the students about how to conduct an interview. They were going on a field trip to Chowk to learn about other types of kaarigars. It was an interesting experiment (the teaching, I mean) that resulted less in things taught and taught me more about the differences between cultures in our understanding of what makes basic conversation. Also, I realized this was especially difficult for many of the women who previous to this training experience, rarely interacted with

than sufficient to gain her a place in the third batch of students set to start after my return. I received a few brief messages saying that she was enjoying her time there and was being challenged in ways that she had not before. It had taken a lot to convince her husband to allow her to do this program. She even asked that I send a voice message to him to help convince him that this was a good thing to do. The school was far away from Khadra, nearly an hour to travel there, taking two shared autos (a total of 40 rupees, one-way) and a 10-minute walk. Because most of the students came from Khadra, this was a common tale and something the director was prepared to deal with by meeting with sons, husbands, and fathers to convince them of the near home-like nature of the school.

I received a message from Rehana describing an unfortunate event, and news that she may not be able to continue. One day she ran out of money and had to walk all the way home from Kadhai Ghar. Her phone died on the way, and she was unable to communicate with her husband about her situation. She arrived home to a thrashing. Without money to travel, thus making the journey shorter, she would not be able to continue her studies. Much about her husband's response can be read through the lens of unemployed male rage. Her seeming relative *azaadi* (freedom) from the Khadra-based environments as he remains home and unemployed is one culprit for these frequent outbursts.[35] This rage stemming from what seemed to be a dwindling power over Rehana is a gendered rage.

*****

As I worked through this dissertation, someone familiar with my research mused to me about the difficulties the Center ladies faced with movement and their need for tactical cutting: "Is it just the patriarchy?" Deniz Kandiyoti's "Bargaining with the Patriarchy" and Arlie Hochschild's *The Managed Heart* certainly come to mind. A tempting but inadequate formulation, it is certainly a factor. One of the inhibitors in women's movement is family,

---

individuals they did not already know to some extent. For them, the inclination was to dive straight into the more difficult interview questions without providing a bit of introduction.

[35] This incident with Rehana was only one of many the director of the embroidery institute heard about and often had to manage. Families, particularly husbands, were less likely to let their women travel the 45-minute long journey alone. Women who had been a part of the program for some time learned the positives of having their wife (sister, etc.) fully employed, and gradually gave them more freedom to travel. However, it was rough for almost every woman in the beginning. Rehana also learned that this was a place where she could ask for money should this ever happen again.

particularly male family members like brothers, husbands, fathers, fathers-in-law, or cousins. The issue is not that they constantly or consistently place paabandi on women, but rather that there is a lack of consistency. I argue that this problem in part rests, in part, on the increasingly unstable employment opportunities for Muslim men in Khadra, their inconsistent presence at home, and the insecurities (emotional and financial) of this state of being. This has led to women's lack of preparedness when it comes to travel that may be possible at times, or not at others, depending on the mood and temperament of the men at home. A part of this is that women do need to ask before preparing to go anywhere beyond Khadra. Regular, committed, and agreed-upon work was typically acceptable, with conditions and exceptions, of course. However, the occasional shift in permissible movement comes somewhat as a shock to the women's regular movement. Family members are able to open and close possibilities in the environmental and architectural space. This section addresses some of the ways women encountered obstacles as their male family members, how their movement was impacted, and the emotional labor required to circumnavigate those moments.

Rehana's husband is a driver. He does not own a car but works for a company that rents one to him. Because access to a car is not guaranteed, driving is a very unstable source of income for the family. While in Lucknow, if he does not have a car, he would lounge around the home or be absent most of the day, drinking with other unemployed or under-employed men in the area. His most frequent and lucrative trips were to Nepal, ferrying young men across the border for laboring jobs. The trip takes him only about 7 hours to complete; however, once he arrives, he must wait for another rider to come along (a return trip) in order to return to Lucknow. This means that he would be gone for weeks at a time, leaving Rehana to ensure the family's survival through her chikan work. Such frequent and extended absences from the home created an

unstable household energy when he did return. It was a shock to the household dynamic. This was due not just to his abrupt crackdown on movement but by his very presence. The household is comprised of her two youngest out of five daughters (ages 14 and 16), her grandson (a boy of about 6 years old), and a constant rotation of her three eldest, married daughters, her sons-in-law, and their children. Due to difficulties and dramas in her married daughters' families, her house is seen as a site of refuge and repair where they and their husbands could seek respite. The infrequent presence of their father, who could range in emotions from a gentle, quiet man, to a raging temper, would interrupt this sanctuary Rehana crafted for the women in her family. When he was back in town, I rarely saw visitors come to the house. Muslim families in general in Khadra and the Old City suffer greatly from the inconsistency in their men's employment possibilities. Based on my conversations with men and women in and around my field site, this instability increased with the election of Narendra Modi, implementation of the GST (Goods and Services Taxes)[36], and demonetization in 2016.[37]

---

[36] The Goods and Services Tax Act was passed into law in 2017 and came into effect that same year. The impact on artisans and shopowners has been negative. Items sold in the "Handicraft Sector" are taxed 12-15% compared to pre-GST times of 5%. The tax scheme places a tax on both the raw materials and finished products. For artisans, who must often provide their own raw materials, this change has been devastating. For items such as thread, the raw cotton holds a certain tax percentage according to GST, but the additional processing of twisting the material into yarn adds an additional tax. The burden of shouldering these extra costs is solely on the artisans unless the middleman or shop owner provides those materials. At the time of implementation, artisans across India spoke out against the new scheme and demanded changes. The tax of certain materials was decreased in certain states, but the damage had already been done according to journalists in Lucknow I spoke with who covered GST.
For additional information about the impact of GST on artisans: Nawani, Priya. "Impact of GST Over Indian Handicraft Industries: SAG Infotech." SAG Infotech Official Blog. SAG Infotech, October 13, 2020. https://blog.saginfotech.com/gst-impact-handicraft-industries.
"How the GST has affected traditional weavers in West Bengal". *Down To Earth.* August 18, 2017 Friday. https://advance-lexis-com.ezproxy.lib.utexas.edu/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:5PBG-7B71-JDKC-R2PM-00000-00&context=1516831.
Sagar. "MSP Hike, Demonetisation, GST Compounded Crisis in Textile Industry: Mills' Association VP." The Caravan. The Caravan, September 10, 2019. https://caravanmagazine.in/economy/textile-mills-crisis-spinning-industry.

[37] On November 8, 2016, the Government of India announced the immediate demonetization of 500- and 1000-rupee notes in an effort to curb the exchange in black market counterfeit bills. What followed was an economic and humanitarian crisis that extended well beyond the day of implementation. While individuals were allowed to exchange their bills through banks across the country, the timeline and announcement caused such panic that many

Rehana, like most of the kaarigar families I met, was in a constant, difficult state of extracting herself from debt. The two youngest and remaining, unmarried daughters stayed at home during the day because there was not enough money to pay for school things. They took care of the house and did not contribute substantially through waged labor (although they were skilled in chikan and helped their mother on occasion)[38]. Rehana's grandson, however, was allowed to go to school. Rehana was very excited when a relative offered up her son, who was currently living in Dubai working at an office job, to marry Rehana's second youngest daughter. The relative even claimed not to require any dowry which is a considerable concern for kaarigar families who are consistently in debt, often due to wedding expenses.[39] They were taken in by her daughter's beauty, fair skin, and capabilities in all things home-making. Rehana said they would get the engagement fixed and plan on having the wedding in three years. She wanted to ensure that another daughter would be taken care of financially, and, unlike the others, be able to travel abroad where everyone assumed life would be easier for her. It was with great difficulty that Rehana continued to financially support her family throughout the ups and downs of her husband's employment. His absence allowed her to proceed in a way that ensured some level of

---

people flocked to their banks *en masse* resulting in people waiting in line for days to exchange bills. For industries such as textiles that run on a cash economy, this was a crisis resulting in individual and collective losses. Some kaarigars told me they and others they knew were never able to exchange their bills. Zardozi kaarigars I spoke to in 2017 pointed to this event as one of the first major hurts to the industry leading to many kaarkhaanas closing and kaarigars leaving the industry.

[38] I am not sure why Rehana did not attempt to bring her daughters into the work as other families did. She did start embroidering for wages at a very young age because her family was very poor. Everyone worked. However, she did not push her daughters into the waged labor market. Occasionally they might help her work on something she is already embroidering but they never came with her to the Center, and she never brought pieces back for them to do. Sometimes she did reflect on her early start in the chikan industry, particularly pointing out how poor her mother was. This is what pushed her mother into having her children work from a young age. Perhaps, regardless of her own dire financial straits, she never wanted her daughters to have to resort to working while they're young.

[39] Rehana told me a story about how she paid for one of her daughters' weddings. She said that she and her zardozi-making brother had made some grand chikan/zardozi piece together. Some outsider (not from Khadra) came to her and told her he would be willing to pay 30,000 rupees for her daughter's wedding if she gave them the piece and release all claim to it. This person would be submitting it to the State Craft Awards under their own name. She told me this was a relatively common practice of outsiders purchasing elaborate awards-level pieces and claiming the work as their own.

stability. When he returned, she often complained about him taking the money to go drink, especially if he was unemployed. He would also demand that she inform him when she left the house and when she was to return. Shabana stated that this was a sign he cared for her. A sweet thing.

Following one of his extended absences, I arrived at Rehana's house to pick her up for a visit to my spectacles-provider friend. We sat in the main room drinking chai and talking about how the trip would go. She had a set of frames that she was happy with which would be used for a new set of prescription lenses. No need to spend money on new frames. After chai, I told her I would meet her at the door while she grabbed her purse. Many minutes passed until her eldest daughter came to the door and said that there was some altercation or confusion, that her father was angry with her mother. I went into the kitchen to find Rehana in tears and her husband glaring at her. When he saw me, he turned away. My whiteness would often subdue him in the middle of these temper tantrums. His immediate placidity towards me was a constant reminder of the role I was placed in, with or without my desiring it. Rehana once pointed out that he would accept whatever I said when he refused to listen to anyone else. She smiled and chuckled about that. I used this uncomfortable power of influence in this moment, rightly or wrongly.

Before I went outside and we spoke about her frames, he was listening in from the kitchen. She said that he thought that we were going to meet with someone, some "friend." He claimed to have heard us talking about a "friend", repeating this word "friend" in a way that implied this friend must be a man. He forbade her from going to meet this "friend". To understand the confusion, it's difficult to explain in writing that "friend" may be pronounced as a

Hindi/Urdu word, "*fraind*." When we said "frame," he heard "*fraind*." We left the house soon afterwards, with Rehana still shaken and upset.[40]

This was one of many episodes in which his reappearance in the house shocked the space; a space that is otherwise a relatively tranquil one without the overbearing presence of domineering, bored, and angry men. I witnessed other women in her family (especially her older married daughters) use Rehana's house as a safe haven away from their abusive husbands and in-laws. Other women in the mohalla, or young male relatives also viewed her home as such. Her nephew and my zardozi teacher, Asif, was constantly spending time in the house; however, he later commented, he would not be around if her husband was in town. I tried to be generous in my assessment of her husband, but Asif was less so: "*Woh bevakoof hai*." He's an idiot.

The management of men and their emotions is part of a range of tactics that women must employ to ensure that their mobility is not impeded. This was surely a form of emotional labor as defined by Hochschild. The separation of their own emotions occurs when encountering family members and when discussing the encounter with unrelated women, like those at the Center. For example, following an initial visit to Kadhai Ghar with Rehana and Shabana, the latter chatted excitedly all the way back home and, in the Center, as we worked for the rest of the day. That irked Khala considerably. The next day, however, Shabana's temperature about the entire venture had cooled considerably. As happens when she feels defensive about things beyond her control, she began claiming that the place wasn't that great, was too far away, and that the entire concept of the institute was beyond her comprehension. Rehana and I looked at each other a bit bewildered because just yesterday, she couldn't wait to tell her brother and to start working on her sample piece. After work, I joined Rehana at her home and she estimated that her brother

[40] I acknowledge that much more can be said about issues of class, English-originating words in Hindi, and pronunciation. This is an important discussion that deserves more space than I can give to it here.

must have denied her request to take part. Shabana was too insecure to divulge this paabandi, and, therefore, made it seem like she was the one who had simply changed her mind. Rehana said, "*Aadmi ka dimagh bahut kharab hai*." Men's brains are really spoiled/wretched.

Shabana was very open about most aspects of her life, including the troubles in her marriage and how that impacted everything she did or could hope to do. She and her daughter (7 years old) now live with her brother, sister-in-law, mother, and other extended family in a larger house with multiple sections. A few years prior, her husband divorced her by saying "*talaaq*" (divorce) three times,[41] and then married another woman. By living under her brother's roof, she acknowledged him as her male head of family. She referenced him as a deciding factor of if and when she was permitted to travel beyond the mohalla or Khadra. As a woman who did not see herself as divorced, even though she states that her husband did divorce her, her status was in doubt, not quite single and not quite married. This understanding often depended on the mood she was in and her disposition at the moment towards that man. Sometimes she would curse him and the powerlessness she felt.

The management of men's emotions was as much about managing one's own emotions. One example of this was to not betray your own sense of disappointment or anger when they placed restrictions on your movements. Ring addresses this management directly stating that "men's choleric temperaments require careful handling: heightened sensitivity to emotional signals, anticipatory labors of distraction and derailment – but above all, of containment: women labor (and teach their daughters) to absorb, receive, and tolerate male anger in the containable space of "home," lest it "get away."" Management of Rehana's husband was only necessary when he was in Lucknow. He did not demand that she tell him when she traveled somewhere if

[41] This is not a socially acceptable practice. I constantly heard stories about relatives or women in the mohalla whose husbands left them in some disgraceful way, such as the "triple talaq" or taking a second wife without informing the first. These men were put down as the worst type of husband but, unfortunately, all too common.

he was not in town. But when he was, a phone call to tell him of our plans was necessary. This is pre-meditative and requires emotional and psychological labor. A particular affect in communication is as necessary as the information. Her tone should be light, unassuming, conciliatory, and not arouse suspicions. All of this being necessary when, for all of the other moments he is out of Lucknow, he does not care to know where she is.

Rehana felt anxiety and tenshan related to expectations, particularly regarding the amount of time she is away from the area. Environs create tenshan. Orientations can create tenshan in the body manifesting in a physical and mental response. To relieve the body of some of this, tactical cuts are important. When those cuts are unavailable, tenshan manifests and represents a fear of what could happen. Fear of male anger may come when men interpret their wives' (or daughters') actions as not aligned with given environs, as not being properly oriented to what is expected of their behavior. The emotional labor in the management of men is a means of avoiding tenshan, rage, and more potential restrictions. Thinking through these encounters through the lens of emotional labor and women's work to avoid tenshan and male rage is more productive than a Western feminist lens that may engage instead with the women's lack of liberal freedom of body, movement, and space (Mohanty 1984; Ong 1988). It is a balancing of when and what to say. Was it worth the cost? How to keep men open to their needs who women already assume to be lacking in empathy or any understanding of women? How to avoid eliciting a potentially negative response? What is his mood that day? These are important questions when it comes to containment.

Similar to Ring, I saw Rehana teach her daughters to contain and then absorb the anger of men. One of her daughters was previously married. Her first husband took a second wife without telling her. They separated and she married again. The second husband seemed nice to me in the

limited time we were all together at Rehana's home. He was a traveling salesman selling bags and purses at markets and fairs. He returned to town briefly. One day they planned an outing to walk around. His jeans had to be washed and nearing the time they had to leave, he found they were still wet. Seeing the husband on the precipice of a mood, Rehana stepped in and scolded her daughter for not preparing her husband's clothes in a timely manner. She apologized on her daughter's behalf multiple times and he seemed to be placated. Mothers protecting their daughters from their husband's anger meant they had to bear that anger instead. Better to be scolded by your mother than your husband flying into a rage and potentially divorcing you on the spot, like Shabana. This was the creation of one tenshan to avoid another potentially more damaging one.

I do not want to give the impression that the only thing these women did in the face of new or resuscitated restrictions was to find a way to tip toe around them or to accept them. They knew when it was worth expending the energy to push back. Pushing back wasn't just about attempting to change the boundaries of movement, but also to do the opposite of emotional labor, to show their rage and make clear the feeling of injustice. When Rehana's husband accused her of meeting a "friend" or of purposely turning off her phone or of failing at being a good wife, she made her rage known of being falsely accused. However, it is the containment of emotions that is preferred. In the case of Ring's Pakistani apartment community, women often had to work together to make this happen. I did hear about this kind of group effort from Rehana when her daughters would step in when she and her husband fought. This kind of management of men's emotions would hopefully keep the door open to various kinds of movement.

Cuts part one: tactical cuts, galis and roads

Gali technique: Travel in the galis requires a certain awareness of one's surroundings and the pitfalls (literally and figuratively) of taking them. Those who know these paths move at a brisk clip, with each foot surely moving to certain spots where a stone was less rickety or where water does not pool. Monsoon gali-hopping was even more treacherous. During one of our trips to Gulzar, the printer, I stepped in what I thought was a shallow bit of water but was in fact a pool of sludge. A woman who was in the gali outside her door doing laundry looked at me in pity and told me to extend my sullied leg. She grabbed a bucket of water and doused my leg, rubbing it to ensure the muck was entirely removed. Very clean and wet and now laughing, we continued. The wonderful thing about salwars (pant type) is that due to their billowy architecture, they dry quite easily. In the oppressive humidity, a cool, wet leg felt quite nice.

The first time I told Rehana about Gulzar's shop and roughly where it is located, she exclaimed that she knew a much better way of approaching it than descending down the steep hill. We would approach from the side of Pakkaa Pul road and then go through the galis. It was better because it was shorter, and we would not have to deal with traffic or dust. However, one had to beware of sludge. When trying to recall how to get to a place through the galis, movement is less about 'lefts' and 'rights' and more about a general sense of direction. Also important is not to overthink. Any time I would actively think about directions, which gali to take, I tend to make a mistake and be forced to retrace my steps. In Banaras where most movement happens through the galis, my friend told me that to get to my guest house from his home, all I needed to do was to "follow the bodies." My guest house was located right next to the burning ghat at Manikarnika Ghat. When lacking such visual signs, there were other ways such as noting particular houses or a precarious pathway by pipe over a drainage creek, that signaled you were on the right path. We did eventually get to the shop after a few reversals and questions to shopowners. It was, all-in-all, a more pleasant way to get there without the intensity of traffic and fear of tumbling down the ditch.

Once we arrived at the print shop, Rehana would sit down to rest and I would start poking around the blocks. I brought her block after block asking what she thought of each one for the project. During one of these trips, we took my host mother along. She too was an embroiderer and lover of kaarigari and had grown jealous of the printed fabrics I brought hope. As the time

ticked by, Rehana grew more and more anxious to get back and my host mother grew more excited as she discovered new blocks. Rehana kept glancing at the time on her phone and the clock on the wall. She didn't want to say anything to upset us, but, she whispered, if she didn't get back soon, dinner would be late, and her husband would not be happy. She did end up leaving us to avoid encountering his discontent.

*****

Learning how to move through any city takes time and practice and, if possible, the help of someone willing to show you how to simply move in space. After that comes the tactics and cuts. These may take the form of movement I've just described, "gali cuts". Unfortunately, to acquire the deftness and ease of moving through galis, you have to be willing to walk into hidden puddles of muck. I explore the tactical movement of 'cutting' as a way to work within our given environments.

When I refer to tactical movement I am talking about movement as it primarily exists; how chikankari women should be able to move within their overlapping environments through cuts across space. How do women move? The need to cut is related to the environmental expectations of women such as childcare, domestic care (cooking, cleaning, etc.), or maintaining filial relations. The temporal requirements of chikan labor are also a factor. Capital's continuous pressure on the bodies of laborers to complete the same labor in shorter periods of time extends beyond the shop floor to pressure bodies to cut time in every aspect of life. My term 'tactical movement' comes from the 'tactics' and 'strategies' as outlined by Michel de Certeau: "strategies are able to produce, tabulate, and impose these spaces, when those operations take place, whereas tactics can only use, manipulate, and divert these spaces…The space of a tactic is the space of the other." Strategies are significant for their ability to establish places and move according to the rules laid out by those creating the strategies. Tactics, instead, play with time,

making use of "the rapidity of the movements that change the organization of space" (de Certeau 1988, 38). To move with tactics is to move in cutting time. Perhaps one could describe strategic movement as building or creating time and dictating it as one moves. de Certeau goes on to describe the "styles" or "ways of operating" of a man living outside of his native place: "Without leaving the place where he has no choice but to live and which lays down its law for him, he establishes within it a degree of plurality and creativity. By an art of being in between…" (Ibid, 29-30) This 'art of being in between' produces "a gap of varying proportions opened by the use [the consumer] makes of them" (Ibid, 32) This is where a tactic is employed: "A tactic must...make use of the cracks that particular conjunctions open in the surveillance of the proprietary powers. It poaches in them. It creates surprises in them. It can be where it is least expected. It is a guileful ruse" (Ibid, 37). Styles and ways of operating represent the manners in which the consumer (of culture) makes 'use' of 'constraining order or language'.

Tactical movement is to cut out time, obstacles, and discomfort. These are the "ruses" (Ibid). Having a variety of modes of transportation (legs, motorcycles, electronic rickshaws, Vikrams) allows for creativity. The cultivation of technique develops with time as well as through interpersonal networks (i.e., advice and gossip, or *gapshap*). To cut across space and time via the galis is gali-hopping. Some of the tactical movements employed by the women, as this section will show, are ways of operating that are already in use and acceptable.[42] The 'use' of them is to employ them as tactics in mobility. In Khadra, they provide comfort and can expand the travel field. They may also raise the family's or community's temporal expectations of women. The ways these expectations present themselves are generally patriarchal in nature

[42] I acknowledge that this description of tactical movements brings to mind Kandiyoti's "Bargaining with the Patriarchy." I argue that while tactics are involved in that bargaining exchange, the "cuts" I discuss this chapter are distinct. Women employ the use of cuts for multiple reasons, many of which are related to environmental and infrastructural discomfort that comes with traveling around and beyond Khadra. More of this will be addressed in the sections to come.

and often without rhyme or reason. The environs will also create additional pressures and requirements affecting how and what tactics women employ when they travel.

The form and 'style' of tactical movement change depending on the surroundings. The physical space of Khadra lends itself well to this. Typical of pre-planned urban spaces in South Asia, the development of mohallas was organic, with structures added to the exterior, expanding the cluster of buildings outward. In maps of neighborhoods where Muslim kaarigars have lived and worked for generations – Khadra, Chowk, Aminabad, Qaisarbagh, Nakhas, Amber Ganj, Daliganj, and Thakur Ganj – galis twist and loop, crawling out like roots. As I traveled to Nakhas from Amber Ganj after interviewing a *zardoz*, I passed by tiny kite shops, zardozi needle and supplies shops, block-printing and block-making shops, old neighborhood bakeries, and more.

This was fascinating to me. Over the years I have spent in Lucknow, the decline of the great kaarigars and of life in the galis were common topics of discussion amongst the Lucknow literati and members of the upper middle classes. They bemoaned the losses; it was impossible to find real chikan, high quality zardozi, or any of the nostalgic, supposedly quaint aspects of Lucknowi culture that reflected a certain class who could afford to consume such costly items. Tourists from larger cosmopolitan cities like Delhi, come to experience some nice Lucknow-style hospitality, or *mehmaan navaazi* (lit. waiting upon guests). It is true that the Nawabi style patronage is no longer present in Lucknow. It is not true that those who were patronized have disappeared. Traveling with Rehana, to various centers and groups of chikan kaarigars, as well as to a few zardozi shops allowed me to see that these daily aspects of most kaarigars' lives, romanticized and traded as social capital via nostalgia, are very present, lived, and not quaint.[43]

[43] Seemingly small and charming gali life holds a number of difficulties that make life unnecessarily hard for residents. The same infrastructural problems that plague lower class mohalla plagued these areas: open draining, lack of running water, inconsistent access to toilet facilities were pressures that affected women disproportionately more than men. I will investigate the physical and mental toll directly linked to these issues in Chapters 2 and 3.

Those who claimed the loss no longer saw the galis as viable and vibrant places of creation but as places lacking a "modern" infrastructure (present in larger areas such as Mahanagar and Gomti Nagar) signaling poverty. It is also not my intention to imply that these sites of craft in Lucknow may only be found in the galis. These are unplanned place-making battles for legitimacy and authenticity of culture. The blame for this supposed decline is often placed on the shoulders of the kaarigars themselves for being willing to make whatever quality of work necessary to make money. The second group to blame was the unwitting consumer who knew nothing about what "real chikan" is, and, therefore, did not care about purchasing embroidery that was cheaply made. This all comes back to viewing the spaces where kaarigars reside as poverty-ridden places where the creation of quality work seemed impossible, or nearly so, and that this lack was related to the unplanned (and therefore not modern) nature of the physical structure of places like Khadra and Chowk.

The shape, length, width, ground consistency, and contents of galis differ from one turn to the next. Not all are residential. Homes are mixed in with religious centers such as masjids or mandirs, schools, or small businesses like tailors, snack shops or food stalls, meat sellers, vegetable sellers (*sabji/sabzi-wallahs*), many kite shops, ladies' general stores (a true revelation to me), and on and on. These were, mixed in with homes, a part of homes, alongside or outside of homes. There were often motorbikes or scooties (scooter bikes) blocking the path – or goats or cows or hogs. During the winter, the *sabziwallah* next the Center had a few goats covered in jute vegetable sacks. He said, "Well we don't know if they feel the cold like we do, so this is just in case." He fed them the bruised and unsellable produce. Children were encouraged to play in the galis. They were less likely to come across strangers or get hit by fast-moving vehicles. Rehana's young grandson was always begging her or me for money to buy a small packet of biscuits to

share with his friends. He irritated me so much with how he carried on. He would only stop when I slipped him a 5-rupee coin. I preferred that he ask me before he pestered Rehana. Parents had less need to oversee their children if they knew they were in one of the nearby galis. The roads were quite a different story.

Beyond the galis are wide and straight, perpendicular (although often curving) roads where traffic (and road rage) is high. The history of the construction of these roads is well known. During the 1857 Revolt, the British had a difficult time penetrating the city to make an effective assault to recapture the city. Keith Hjortshoj provides a compelling history of the urban and structural development of the city from the time when the capital of Awadh was transferred from Faizabad to Lucknow in 1722 up until the present (Hjortshoj 1979). He described the Nawabs as the most prolific builders in South Asia at the time, with each succeeding Nawab building his own array of palaces and *imambaras*[44] around and beyond Lucknow. As for the residential areas surrounding these grand structures, he describes them as "labyrinthine" enclosures used by residents to get to their own homes and localities. The British marched into the city with battering rams to re-claim the city and rescue the surviving British inhabitants holed up in the British Residency building. Many of these constructions were entirely or partially destroyed, and in some cases split in half during the campaign. One of the most infamous of these streets is named "Victoria Road", running through the heart of Chowk as a regular reminder of the structural impacts on the urban landscape of Lucknow wrought by the British. Hjortshoj sees the violent introduction of such new urbanization schemes as "built without regard for indigenous urban patterns, but rather as extensions of a new urban pattern centered in

[44] Imambaras are religious structures significant to the Shi'a community in Islam. They are not mosques. They are intended to hold majlis for the mourning of the Karbala martyrs Imam Hussain and his followers. *Taziyas,* or replicas of the tombs of the Imam and his family members who died at Karbala. During the month of Muharram, they are mourned through a number of rituals such as majlis, recitations, enactments, and processions (jaloos). The Taziyas are carried out of the imambaras and onto the streets during the jaloos.

Hazratganj... Although these patterns are based upon opposite principles, they have become interwoven to such an extent that they are now structurally and functionally interdependent" (Hjortsha, 42). I agree with Hjortsha about the interdependency of galis and roads, however, regardless of their interdependency and the ability to cross from one to the other, these are classed spaces. To live, work, and travel in certain areas of the city, such as Khadra and its galis, denotes these separations.[45]

The creation of roads, pathways, and highways speak to a city's plans to develop into a modern city, usually connecting this new corridor to national unity and progress. Somewhere beyond these grand narratives lies the actual impact of those projects, cut along lines of class, caste, religion, gender. Scholars such as Penny Harvey and Hannah Knox on Peru (Harvey and Knox 2021) and Naveeda Khan on Pakistan (Khan 2006) have addressed the eagerness, enchantment (Harvey and Knox) or rejection (Khan). Where do women and their movement fit into a city's plans for modern development? How do these projects impact how women must adjust and manage their space to maintain accessibility and movement? Developmental shifts and seeming expansions in transport impact women in specific ways. What do environs that impact their movement conceive of the paths women use to travel? What cuts are accessible to women and which ones are not? Efforts of infrastructural modernization in Lucknow are often coupled with the disposal of poor, brown working bodies that occupy urban spaces where development is supposedly yet to take place.

[45] The lack of infrastructural development, one example being the continued use of open-air drainage leading to increased disease and illness in gali residences, is a problem that plagues many of the older Muslim-residential areas (not just in Lucknow). Soon after I left Lucknow, Rehana informed me that it was dengue season in the mohalla. Every single person in the house caught it. The rainy season continues to bring with it many drug-resistant mosquito-borne diseases. The open draining is located at the entrance to most homes all but guaranteeing infection to occur.

Is it a form of postmodern resistance to reject the roads and favor the galis? The avoidance of the main road was an incentive for gali-hopping. The roads were uncomfortable places for women to be. I hesitate to make a claim about the radical nature of galis in one way or the other because the discomfort associated with the roads are often used as reasons to keep women from traveling on them. It was more comfortable to stay in the mohalla, in the galis. I attempt here to not turn this into a discussion of restriction versus freedom according to these different pathways.

Looking at the present-day use of these colonial roads, they provide more direct access to certain parts of the city by skipping around the dense mohalla. In Khadra, the road that leads to the bridge, Pakka Pul (meaning 'fixed', 'permanent', or stable' bridge), crossing into Chowk is referred to as just that, Pakka Pul Road. It is divided by a cement median which keeps traffic, for the most part, divided. While this road is wider and able to accommodate more vehicles, it is also used by wider (and much slower) vehicles that do not fit through galis. The variety of vehicles with different speed capacities increases the traffic. The width is further diminished by the large number of road-side eateries and shops where motorcycles park. At times, the volume of vehicles is so great that there is nothing for pedestrians to do but to pick through the vehicles. With dupattas covering our mouths from the expulsion of exhaust directly into our faces, traveling on the main roads can be particularly difficult for female bodies, especially if they are traveling with children. I heard from women who were not used to inhaling so much exhaust that traveling beyond the house was hazardous. They would come home with extreme headaches due to exhaust inhalation and dehydration.[46]

[46] Dehydration from purposely withholding from water intake is closely linked to lack of toilet access outside of the home.

During an argument with Rehana about whether or not she should take a position outside of home, she brought up the extended exposure to exhaust while in transit as a reason for staying home. She stated that she felt ill when she returned home after sitting in traffic to cross the bridge back into Khadra. I admit that at the time, I saw it as an excuse for not traveling beyond Khadra. She was not settling in well at a new center and she was nervous about the distance away from her home. I so desperately wanted her to work at a position that offered to pay her medical bills, provide chai at regular intervals, promise annual raises in salary, and additional pay for lessons she gave to the other kaarigars in stitches they didn't know. The picture was so rosy to me that her claims of headaches due to exhaust seemed like an excuse and something that could be dealt with. I am ashamed to think this now, especially as Lucknow tops national and global pollution-level charts.[47] Traveling by way of the enclosed and relatively exhaust-free galis is a health issue for women.[48] Accessibility to closed cars is also lacking in these areas. The many types of shared vehicles are entirely open air. By sticking to travel and work within Khadra, women could take advantage of remaining in an environment that was familiar to them and their families, and they could employ the use of galis where the chances of inhaling toxic fumes were relatively few.[49] Conversations with Rehana and the others about travel between their home, the Center, shops in Khadra and beyond Khadra, leads to the question of when is it important, and necessary, to travel employing tactical movement, such as cuts? When do women

[47] This very real concern about the health risks of going out beyond the home, especially for communities of lower socio-economic statuses has been reported. The gendered aspect of this …. https://www.hindustantimes.com/lucknow/lucknow-ranked-ninth-most-polluted-city-in-the-world-says-report/story-RwUJN6oj4rJ6luSvCkR8cP.html

[48] To say more about this, more thorough research and interviewing will be necessary.

[49] The caveat to sticking to guli-hopping to travel and viewing Khadra as the best place to get most things also has the adverse effect of the difficulty of going outside of Khadra for anything else, such as the eye doctor. While certain services are available in Khadra, the quality is not the same as in other parts of the city. Qaisar bagh, where my friend is located, is home to a circle of dozens of spectacles shops of all sizes and price-points. The case I found with doctors is even more difficult. Tahira complained about one of the few in their area as a creep: "*Meri behen kehti thi jab bhi doctor ke paas jana, akeli mat jana. badtameez doctor*. He put his hands on my friend to feel her stomach and kept moving his hands up." "My sister used to say that when you go to the doctor, don't go alone. Ill-mannered doctor…."

actually employ cuts to travel and what are they traveling to do? Many instances of travel that I discuss in this dissertation are embroidery work-related. This does not mean, however, that women left the area of their home to do only that.

de Certeau approaches tactics as small actions to make movement possible in places where one's body is 'matter out of place'. Tactics are not meant to ameliorate the problem of the 'fit' of bodies for spaces (Ahmed 2014). Tactics are for the bodies that don't. Nirmal Puwar and Sara Ahmed address this concept of bodies that 'fit' into certain places through racialized and gendered bodies taking up space in the hallowed halls of institutions such as Parliament or corporations with rigid work cultures. Puwar states that bodies which intrude on the somatic norm are 'trespassers' and 'space invaders.' Ahmed sees bodies that don't fit as 'willful subjects' who refuse to align with the 'good' and 'general will' of society. In short, Space is full; "there is a connection between bodies and space, which is built, repeated and contested over time" (Puwar, 8). Space is very willing to accommodate new bodies and the orientations they hold. Ahmed sees space as "experienced and lived as oriented toward bodies, with their differing capacities and incapacities" (Ahmed 2014, 147). Active practice is involved in maintaining the shape and closed nature of space. When these closed spaces are invaded by those from without, the response is one of discomfort, as if one's personal space has been invaded.

Puwar and Ahmed discuss these bodies as 'matter out of place', 'space invaders', and 'willful'. Their subjects differ from the ladies at the Center in an important way. Those bodies populate spaces with the intention to sit, stay, and work in institutional spaces, but the ladies I embroidered with must travel through that 'out of place' space, usually in ways that abide by the environment that follows them from their domestic and community spaces, theoretically, to wherever they go. Women's gendered bodily experience makes complicity to the rules of their

environs all the more important when traveling beyond their mohalla. It is through the use of tactics that the ladies were often able to deal with instances of feeling like bodies out of place. To employ cuts was to ensure continued mobility necessary for work, school, play, familial and communal responsibilities. And comfort.

Cuts part two: comfort for bodies "out of place"

Up until this particular day, I was mostly traveling to Chowk, across Pakka Pul from Khadra into the oldest parts of the city, to get whatever chikan printing work I needed to get done. One of my favorite places was Phoolwali Gali, through Akbari Gate. This narrow shopping street was, in a previous life, where famed courtesans of the city could be seen from their lattice-worked balconies. This was also where many kaarigars, particularly *chaandi ka varq*[50] kaarigars and embroidery supply shops, were located. In 2019 during my time there, only two very old chaandi ka varq kaarigars remained and no embroiderers. They were being edged out by new jewelry stores (definitely not from the old Lucknow families, my host mother, Najma, once told me). About halfway down the increasingly cramped gali (thanks to the insane number of motorbikes jammed up against each other) is where I spent a lot of my time and money. This was my happy triangle. On the right side was the *dhaga* (thread) seller, on the left was the gali, and further up on the left, a shop for *kapda* (cloth). The left-sided narrow gali was where much of the block-printing for chikan happens in the city (some good, some not so good). Bundles upon bundles of printed cloth tied up together are piled onto motorbikes outside these storefronts. There were a few other dhaga stores as well, but this gali was primarily dedicated to printing. Per the trends and demands on the chikan market, their blocks were large, uncomplicated, and not meant for finer work ("*naazuk ka kaam*"). There are many printers throughout the city because chikankari kaarigars are all over the city. As the home of many of the better kaarigars in Lucknow, including the well-known NGO kaarkhaana and shop, Sewa, Khadra was one of the epicenters of chikan and zardozi where diverse and naazuk sets of blocks could be obtained.

[50] Chaandi ka varq involves the hammering with a wooden mallet thin sheets of silver leaf against a wooden block. Sheets of leaf arrived to the kaarigar which were then hammered until they were mere wisps of silver used to cover edibles such as *paan* (betel leaf, often with tobacco), *mithai* (sweets), and biryani. It takes about 4 hours of consistent, steady hammering to get the sheets to the desired thinness. As one walks through these gulis, the ears would be greeted with the comforting sound of this hammering. Sadly, as this guli has gradually been overtaken by new chikan shops and jewelry shops, these sounds are now a thing of the past.

One day, I left the center early to print more practice cloth and Khala asked why I would travel so far. She claimed there were printers scattered throughout the lanes of Khadra, indicating that there was one not far from the Center. You can get almost everything you need in Khadra (with the exception of bulk dhaga). But these suppliers were located in the tricky-to-navigate galis. I was hesitant to wander through the galis without an expert. I knew I would get lost. Movement in the galis was common but traversing them with the assistance of Google Maps was usually impossible.

After chatting with another Western researcher from Delhi who frequented one particular printer in Khadra, I knew I had to go there. One day, she took me there by one route that involved a steep climb down into a bone-dry ditch. It was risky but direct. To go down this hill, there are a few different worn paths, some of which were steeper and for the more adventurous and capable souls. We selected the most gradual one to lower our chances of slipping (which I only did once) and evoking laughter of those watching. This researcher described the printing shop as an old man with sons and sons-in-law, descendent from one of the great block printers. Following our descent, we went down one gali then took a right. You can tell when you get close to a printer because the *neel* (blue ink used for chikan printing) stains the gali and flows in the open drainage. The shop was attached to a home. The only way you knew there was a shop was by the open door which opened into a few rooms where men sat behind a table, block in hand, confidently stamping stitched and unstitched cloth. Piles of blocks awaited us. The son of the block printer was there, Gulzar, and I interviewed him briefly as he printed a pile of saris. I didn't have anything to print that day, but I knew that I would never return to the shops in Chowk.

I mentioned to Rehana my interest in re-locating this mythical printing shop. Unable to find the shop on our first attempt, our outing was more of a practice in moving through the galis. We left from her house. I started taking the path that I knew led back to a slightly larger gali, Bappuwali Gali, that then led to Sitapur Road. From Sitapur Road, if you went south, you would reach Pakka Pul. Rehana told me that there was a short-cut. It was March and extreme heat was starting to set in. The road was open, and we would be at the mercy of the sun. She said she didn't like to go out on the street that led to Sitapur Road with so many men loitering and just staring as you walked by. Instead, she and, I then saw, many other women ducked around this uncomfortable situation by gali-hopping. There was less noise, less dust, less sunlight, less

people (men). She said, "*Thandak rahti hai, hai na*," gesturing to the nice cool shade provided from the densely packed brick and cement houses. When we were eventually forced out onto the road with the dust, men, and sunlight, I reminded myself to learn all such gully-cuts. I also noticed that these hops were mostly used by women and children. This is not to say that men did not use the galis. Life in them was a lively affair that crossed gender lines. However, the way women use them differs considerably. The loitering men on the main thoroughfares do not mind being seen. The Center ladies did not like being seen (by other men).[51] Also, they generally did not like men. If men were at the chai shops and on the street, they did not feel like they could be there comfortably. They would feel the stares of the men while they waited to quickly get little plastic bags of chai and samosas wrapped in newspaper. For this reason, they sent Tahira, a teenager who thrived on being watched by boys.

Wandering around Khadra was usually easy for Rehana to commit to. She didn't have to obtain prior permission from her husband before venturing out. Khadra was still home territory. Even her daughters could wander up to the main road and grab a shared auto to a little further down in either direction without being accompanied by Rehana. It was when traveling beyond this area that Rehana would have trouble with her husband. Also, her daughters didn't feel comfortable traveling alone.[52] This ability to go to most places in Khadra was related to the ease with which they were able to catch a ride on one of the many shared electric rickshaws circling the same route. The cost was only 5 rupees (which then jumped to 10 rupees to cross the bridge). If there was an emergency, it was easy to get home quickly. There were even electric rickshaws, I would discover on this excursion with Rehana, that would take you deep into the heart of the galis. I found this to be the case with much of Chowk and the extended mohalla branching out from there as well. It was home territory.

*****

[51] Following a ceremony celebrating Khala's niece's one-year birthday, it was late at night for some of the younger women there, around 9pm. Beenish's 14-year old sister told me that it's dangerous and that I should feel afraid to be going home alone. When I asked her why, she laughed, and said, "I don't know!"

[52] One example of this was Rehana's second youngest daughter being offered a position to work in a house cooking in cleaning. When she found out what would be required to get there, going well beyond Khadra, she declined the position. When first offered the position, she was very excited at the prospect of being allowed to leave Khadra on her own and to make money. That didn't last after she first traveled the distance with Rehana. Rehana tried to convince her that with time and a little practice that she would be fine, all to no avail.

Comfort is something to strive for, especially for chikan kaarigars who spend so many hours of the day in a bodily attitude of discomfort and pain. Sitting in the Center, the desire to be comfortable was always just out of reach. For Shabana, if only she could just take the work home with her, that would be just right. But by doing that, she pointed out, she would be alone which was definitely not ideal. More comfort could be attained though, by staying in the galis and working at the Center instead of traveling via pollution filled roads. And yet, by staying, it was difficult to pay one's debts with the wages offered in the centers. Each woman had a different gauge of what she desired in order to be comfortable, but it was also interesting when, on the rare occasion that they obtained that ideal, comfortable situation, and found it less than satisfactory. Another consideration, what is someone doing when they seek comfort (i.e., embroidery work, traveling, cooking)? In this section I address the comfort they sought while moving and traveling around and beyond the mohalla. What is the connection between comfort and environs? Seeking comfort could be the result of being a body 'out of place' while being in one's environs, or simply being a body at work. It is an embodied experience to be a body 'out of place.' This is not to say that movement in certain places is not permitted, but rather that certain spaces are not shaped around or fitted to women's bodies. The difference is also that some women feel that level of discomfort in different ways according to other factors such as age or marital status. This section is about finding comfort as and when it is possible, and the constantly shifting scale of what comfort is.

Many women found comfort traveling within Khadra for errands and the items they need, such as in the above description of my wanderings through galis. Both the mode of travel and the location of travel (being within an area of the city they are familiar with) brought them relative comfort, particularly compared to traveling across Pakka Pul Bridge. To make such decisions

were exercises in tactical movement that I gradually copied and assimilated into my own movements. Walking together, Rehana showed me better cuts across space to avoid obstacles, to avoid time, to avoid men, to avoid dust, and to relish in the coolness of the brick and plaster homes built closely together, keeping the hot sun out of the galis. Once exchange I mentioned above: "*Ṭhandak rahtī hai, hai na* (It's cool, isn't it)?" These were small spaces of respite (less discomfort). Men's eyes boring into them was one of the primary reasons not to leave the safe haven of their enclosed mohalla of galis. In the above description of guli-hopping, I describe a few pathways we used to get to Sitapur Road; the chilled galis, Bappuwali Gali, and then the road. The first pathway differs greatly from the second in that they are extremely narrow paths to and between homes where women are more likely to pass through or hang out, openly and comfortably. Small shops are present as well, but these are mostly residential spaces. The second, Bappuwali Gali, is significantly wider and more populated by non-residents passing through to get around Khadra and into the neighboring area, Daliganj. People from other parts of Khadra are more likely to converge here. There were food stalls ("*hotels*") (Lutgendorf 2021), *chaiwallahs*, chemists, and small general stores. For example, in the narrow galis, most people came to recognize me and thus ignore me. Not so when I walked down Bappuwali Gali. For the ladies, the impact of random men on the street was different than that from the restrictions male family members placed on the ladies.

In October, we sat around discussing how nice it would be to get some chai and samosas and have a nice break from embroidering. These little intervals that break up the day would typically come in the late morning when there were still a couple of hours before lunch (typically happening at 1pm). After deciding that we most definitely wanted chai and samosas, the question was always who would go out to the "hotel" to fetch it. Everyone started joking about how

unpleasant it is to go to such places and be surrounded by loitering men. Shabana very rarely retrieved the chai because she hated how she had to wait for the chai to be poured into the little plastic bags, for cups to be counted, and then the samosas to be packed. She felt as though the men sitting around the chai stall were just staring at her. "*Humen admiyon ke beech achha nahin lagta*." I do not like being amongst men. An oft-repeated phrase, especially by Shabana. Women may be allowed to be there and get chai, but it is not a comfortable place to drink their chai. Much better to make it yourself, they said, or ask for it to be brought to your home where one can consume it in peace, away from the smells and dust of the street. Hence, Tahira was always sent out to fetch the goods.

The presence of men in most public spaces was central to women's discomfort while moving. I interpret these men's eyes to be a specific example of the ubiquitous 'male gaze'. The concept of gaze has been discussed by Sartre as *le gaze*, Foucault's panopticon, and then Laura Mulvey's 'male gaze.' In literature, George Owell's 'big brother' takes the role of that gaze. It often implies surveillance. In the case of 'male gaze', it is the surveillance of women's bodies, and sexual pleasure that comes from that, particularly for Mulvey who discusses it in the context of cinema. Women are meant to be gazed upon by men. Gaze can imply a disembodied male presence; also, a feeling that even if men cannot be seen, their 'gaze' can be felt. Support for the male gaze is given by both men and women. It is an attempted structure of surveillance to maintain and apply constant pressure, often using heteronormativity as a tool. Shabana and others had an aversion to men's bodies and their eyes. It was the very act of staring, of being identified so directly, that made her feel as out of place. She was reluctant to be an invader. She rejected the role of invader by refusing to engage with the space where she felt the gaze(s). I too felt the relief as soon as I entered that space (albeit not as intensely in gendered manner so much

as being marked an outsider by my whiteness). The closer I got to that enclosure, eyes that saw me, knew me (somewhat). For the ladies, however, the concern was not just about being known. It was about being looked at by and being around men. I found their dislike of men to be rooted in a general distrust of men due to their own experiences with the men in their lives. The company of women was always preferred.

The two women who seemed to feel these pressures the most were Beenish and Shabana. One way to manage the pressures was sartorial: wrapping themselves in a *niqaab*.[53] The niqaab includes a long back overcoat and a face and head covering. They take time to put on. They are warm to wear which can be taxing on one's energy, especially in the summer months and the month of Ramzan. And yet, Shabana relished the anonymity that enveloping herself in a niqaab allowed. She and Beenish both even forgot to remove their niqaabs a few times at the Center and laughed about how comfortable they felt with them on. Shabana was the most vocal about her general dislike of men and their callousness towards women and their feelings. The niqaab seemed to be an additional layer separating her from them. It did not matter how far both of them were going. Even when she traveled the 3-minute walk in the mohalla to and from the Center, Beenish and Shabana always donned their niqaabs.[54]

While in transit with any of the ladies, I saw that their tactical moves have the ability to cut across spaces of discomfort by utilizing avenues that were more comfortable for travel. These 'avenues of comfort' cut around or across spaces and roads heavily populated by men who, women felt, constantly stare at them. Men-filled streets were often voiced as reasons for avoiding

[53] I do not claim that the sole reason these two women wore the *niqaab* outside of homes was only for comfort. There are a host of familial and communal expectations, particularly of someone in Beenish's situation versus the same of Shabana. I did not have conversations with the women about their sartorial choices and they rarely came up in conversation except in moments like this that I describe in the above paragraph.
[54] I am aware that Saba Mahmood's *Politics of Piety* would add greatly to this conversation. I intend to incorporate it in later iterations of this research and analysis.

travel beyond the interior, comfortable mohalla galis. To contemplate the use of these galis as spaces or avenues of comfort brings into sharp relief the destruction done to these areas back in 1857 (Mookherjee 2015; Das 2006; Butalia 2000). Those wide roads that ploughed through communities are not places that many women are eager to travel on. In many cases, the ladies prefer life and travel in the galis to this new pattern where life is centered in middle- and upper-class affluent districts like Hazrat Ganj which are comprised of long, wide, and open-faced boulevards. The pace and composition of such pathways differ considerably. These areas present a liberal public space to which they do not have complete access and, in fact, may not want access to. When I exclaimed about some new shop or tool that I discovered in Khadra, the response was common: *Khadre men sab kuch milta hai. Khadre se bahir kyun jaenge*?[55]

To deal with the practical problem of travel and being deemed out of place in public spaces was something most women in the mohalla had to manage. Tactical movement is part of a more general management of family members and the environment to allow them to move more freely. Tactics enable women to manage expectations of how, where, and for how long one should travel. Management involves practice and movement with partners. Buddies made newly encountered spaces more comfortable. Tactics used in transit and those that are pre-meditated and communicated (be it verbally or implied in agreed to modes of transportation) to family members, assure them of their compliance with the rules of the imposing space on their gendered bodies. Returning to Laura Ring, she discusses the use of such tactical movements and the difference between urban and rural spaces:

> Zubaida spoke of female friends and relatives who were reluctant to leave the village because of the greater pabandi (restriction) they would face in the city...Even in small towns or older city quarters, women can move about relatively freely. “There is no need for purdah in such places,” Zubaida told me, “because women can find a path from house

[55] “Everything can be gotten in Khadra. Why would one go outside of Khadra?”

> to house without being seen." Since the area outside the building is unambiguously public, women are loathe to traverse it without the accompaniment of male or senior female relatives (Ring, 24).

This hopping from house to house to avoid being seen is similar to the use of avenues of comfort. It excludes the necessity to be in sartorial purdah. There is also something about the ambiguity of certain spaces, such as the gaps between houses or the galis connecting communities, that encourages rather than restricts mobility. However, as Ring points out, there is something about the 'unambiguously public space' that makes the women desire a traveling companion. There are tactical movements used to circumnavigate the imposing space, to circumnavigate pressure by family members such as those I discussed in an earlier section. These I found to be pre-meditative acts or promises of how to travel that align with the environment. Those employed to avoid possible roadblocks (refusals to allow them to travel) were things like traveling with another woman, having that travel be related to embroidery work, and having the travel be to home-type spaces such as homes in the mohalla or the Center. Travel beyond these areas, however, required a different type of cutting mechanism.

Cuts part three: Vikrams and vehicles

I was on a mission (a very lax one) to locate old blocks that use animals in their design. For some reason that I still do not understand, animals in chikan designs had gone out of style. I found that the ladies liked those designs but that there was no demand for them. This led to a drought of animal blocks in all of the block-printers I saw. I have always enjoyed images of flora and fauna, turning those real things into some elaborate piece of embroidery, making them appear realistic but also open to artistic interpretation. I told Rehana about this and she told me that we didn't need to travel to Chowk. The small stores there only carried blocks that designers were sure to use. No one demanded to use animal blocks so they wouldn't be there. Khadra, she said, had a few very old stores with massive collections. This would also be better because it's near the mohalla in case her daughters or her husband call her to return (a very real possibility).

After cutting around Bapuwali Gali, we arrived at Sitapur Road. Rehana appi approached a lone e-rickshaw driver and asked him to take us to "Karbala". He maneuvered to the other side of Sitapur and drove into the mass of galis. This area ran alongside the east side of the Gomti River and opposite to the massive Ghanta Ghar (Clock tower). This area looked much older than the mohalla behind the College. The buildings were mostly made of wood and aging red brick with brittle wooden shutters. There was some crumbling ornate plastering on some of the structures signifying that this area had as some point in its history been more prosperous than it is at present. We went deeper into this other side of Khadra until our e-rickshaw stopped at one of the magnificent *darwaza* (gateway) facades I had ever seen in Lucknow. At least 10 feet high, the archway had bits of the similar plastered stone design from Rumi Gate near Chowk, but this place had remained untouched by conservators or tourists. The only visitors were to a small *maqbara* (shrine) in the back of a massive field where some kids were playing cricket. We walked a bit further where we came upon a couple of block printing shops. These were not where I had visited but Rehana said that the shops were almost as old as the area. These shops, including Gulzar's, were different from the ones in Chowk. Here, I came across middlemen and middle-women and individual designers; but I also saw women who were designing single pieces for members of their family for the holidays.

*****

Getting to Khadra from anywhere in the city, with the exception of Chowk and Aminabad, was not a simple task. Fortunately, I lived in an area called Mahanagar that was not as strategically disadvantageous as it could have been. Before I got my bearings, I settled on getting to Khadra by taking a private auto-rickshaw; an expensive and rather extravagant way to get around. I tried to keep this piece of information from the Center ladies as long as I could, and when the truth did come out, I boldly lied that I would never pay a penny above 40 rupees (I was always charged 100). For women who make 100 rupees per day, to spend half (or all) of that on private transportation was just plain stupid (and lazy).[56] One of the tools women rely heavily on

[56] It is important for me to note here that while I adjusted my travel habits to get around the city by Vikram, this was not as a result of my lack of finances. I had a generous stipend through the Fulbright Nehru scholarship that would

to manage their time are the not-so-majestic, but ever so critical, petrol-guzzling *Vikram*s, or e(lectronic)-rickshaws. Fortunately, Tahira, the youngest of the group and the most desirous of traveling beyond Khadra told me the expert way to travel: Vikrams. These little vehicles are a menace to every other moving thing on the road, but they certainly are a welcome sight when looking to get anywhere around the city for 10 rupees or less. After my expensive travel habit came out and Tahira teased me for a while, I was finally given the insider transportation information. Tahira told me that if I was coming from Mahanagar, then the easiest way to get to the center was by a green-colored Vikram from under the bridge in Nishat Ganj (a 5-rupee e-rickshaw ride away from the main road, a short walk from my house), heading to Chowk. Once I boarded a Vikram to Chowk, she instructed, I must be let out at Panna Lal Road. This is a well-known shopping area in Daliganj, a neighboring area southeast of Khadra. Go down Panna Lal Road. Then you just walk through a maze of galis and will approach the center from behind. And voila! You're at the center! I did eventually get to the point where I could wander through the small streets of Daliganj and Khadra without the use of Google Maps, but until that time arrived, I did have to use my phone to find out just which galis led to the Center, and even then, Rehana told me a more direct way.

A brief description of Tahira: At the time of this research, Tahira was 17 years old and living with her mother, cousin, uncle, and other extended family members on the other side of Bappuwali Gali. When Tahira was not at the Center, she was the object of comments that questioned her respectability and her family's. Her willingness to travel freely, to hang out waiting for the group's chai with men, and the possession of a secret cell phone to call her

---

have allowed me to travel to my field-site through any of the ride-sharing apps if I wished. It was important to me to not do so once I learned how to get there through public, shared transportation. This expanded accessibility to Lucknow changed the way I experienced the city in very important ways. I found it also showed the ladies at the Center that I listened to them and took their advice.

married boyfriend(s) led the ladies to gossip about her. Her mother was discussed in even less favorable terms. She was no longer with her husband (he was never discussed, in a positive or negative way), she ordered Tahira to do most of the housework and cooking, and, worst of all I came to find out, kept most of Tahira's money from chikan. One afternoon the women urged her to secretly begin setting aside some of the money each month, just in case. You don't want to be without any money, and you earned it so you should keep most of it, they said.

Tahira was unmarried. Her father was absent, and she had no male siblings. She had a few older married female siblings and cousins that she visited in Chowk, hence her knowledge of the Vikram routes. She had an uncle in the house, but he was usually busy with work. I met him when I first went to her house. He was a kindly but clearly exhausted man who spent most of his day working as a *chashme* (spectacles) kaarigar. She was compelled to work more for her family which allowed her some freedom of movement. The Center became a place where she could bring out her contraband cell phone. This was her secret that the ladies at the Center dutifully kept. They would often scold her about it, but in the end acknowledged that she was young and ought to laugh it up while she can because life would only get worse as she got older.

A few notes about these little vehicles Tahira pushed me towards. Vikrams are ubiquitous in Lucknow. In Khadra, they keep working-class people moving. Cars are a luxury most people in India still do not have. Motorcycles and "scooties" (scooters), although cheaper, are still cost-prohibitive to many in Khadra. Only one person in Rehana's family, Asif, had a motorbike and that was due to years working in Saudi Arabia. On days of a transportation strike, protests, or holidays, Khadra comes to a standstill. I would soon learn that many of the drivers of Vikrams and the increasingly popular electronic rickshaws were previously zardozi workers. Vikrams are the length and width of a compact vehicle, but with three wheels and in the shape of a small,

open-air van with no moveable parts (doors, windows). The quality of the metal seems as though if it were to have the misfortune of being struck by another moving vehicle, that it would easily crumple like a soda can. They are similar to the traditional auto-rickshaw. The main differences are the shape (like a small van) and capacity (11 people compared to 4). The front driver's seat is a long, padded bench, with a wheel and a long, thin crank on the floor for the shifter. The front and sometimes back areas of the vehicle were flamboyantly decorated. The bench could comfortably fit three men. There were usually at least four crammed in. Separating the driver's seat from the back where the passengers sat was a set of jail-looking bars. The back area had two of the same benches facing each other with an open area where children, purchases from shopping, and men's legs (those attempting to claim a few extra inches of space) were located. Vikrams were intended to carry three bodies on each bench, however, as a rule, four bodies per bench was required. Without them, the driver refused to budge. He always waited for that final fare to make the trip more worth his while. These vans were my refuge and my ticket to Khadra and everywhere else in the city.

The cost is (assumed to be) known by the driver and the customer. No words are exchanged as money passes hands. To alert the driver you wish to descend you must bang on the ceiling or yell at the driver. With 10 rupees being the average maximum amount that could be charged for a route, the minimum amount was always 5 rupees. From there, the driver worked with 1-rupee increases. Crossing a major bridge was often a signifier of an increase. For example, when traveling from Khadra to Chowk, the common mode of conveyance was the e-rickshaw. To get to Chowk, the driver crosses one of two bridges. After crossing the bridge, the price jumps from 5 rupees to the full 10.

The other primary mode of transportation is the e-rickshaw. The vehicle was entirely open air with no doors and four wheels. Two benches with backs facing each other carry four people in total, and, at the front with the driver, one to three additional customers. E-rickshaws could not go as far or as fast as the other two shared autos. They were supposed to be a bit cheaper because they required electricity (which was usually not paid for) to operate, not petrol. Most of the electronic rickshaw drivers, especially in Khadra, used to be zardozi kaarigars. The gradual and recent expulsion of these workers from the industry pushed them into the field of transportation where they could for a relatively low cost, purchase or rent these new electronic rickshaws. All they had to do was to hook-up to an electric line (one they assumedly did not pay for), and they were good to go.

Vikrams, along with electronic rickshaws and auto rickshaws, make up a network of shared vehicles that crisscross around the city. If you could not catch one of these three modes of transportation to the area of the city you wanted to reach, the drivers would often be able to take you to an area where you could catch the vehicle that does drop you off close to your destination. Delhi may have the Metro, but Lucknow has “shared autos”. Halfway through my 10-month period, the city had finally completed construction on a limited metro service with one line that started at the airport and ended at Munshipulia, northeast side of the city. While the Metro was useful for airport travel, the only convenient and cheap way to get around the rest of the city was via shared auto. No one from Khadra or other parts of Old Lucknow took the Metro because those areas had no stops.

While many actively working zardozes I knew had access to bicycles or motorcycles, chikankari embroiderers were entirely reliant on shared vehicles to get around. This was the case with most working- or lower-class women. I saw a good number of women with scooties in the

middle- and upper-class parts of Lucknow, particularly in major shopping areas. I do not recall seeing any women with independent means of transportation in Khadra. If they were not traveling with male relatives on the back of a bike, they were crammed in a shared auto. Their dependency on shared vehicles, instead of being able to establish a more permanent and private mode of transport, seemed to create a self-fulfilling situation in which denial of travel was a possibility. Men had their own modes of transport because their regular travel was assumed. While enabling women to travel further distances, Vikrams seem to be a temporary solution to women's motility issues. Access to capital is also factor. Without seamless access, it was hard for women to maintain consistency in access to mobility. When Rehana ran out of money to get home from Kadhai Ghar, this was a perfect excuse for her husband to point to motility as a problem and something that should be eliminated. If she didn't have the money, she shouldn't travel to work.

Proximity is often a factor in the mobility prospects of women (Urry 2002; McDowell 1999). If easy and cheap travel is not possible, travel is often not possible. My claim is not that before Vikrams, e-rickshaws, or auto rickshaws, travel for chikankari women was not possible. As Vanita stated at the beginning of the chapter, travel and movement has always been open to them. It does however seem that with increased accessibility to cheap Vikrams and e-rickshaws, and auto-rickshaws, that the restrictions on traveling within a certain proximity have loosened. Even with these enhanced modes of transportation, women were still more likely to travel with companions instead of alone. The women who traveled to Kadhai Ghar often rented a Vikram to pick them up and drop them off at home, ensuring they would not have to locate a vehicle with enough spaces, and always left and arrived on time. This seemed to be the easiest way for those at Kadhai Ghar in Charbagh to travel so far, every day.

I often wondered if the ease women and their families felt with Vikrams and other similar vehicles had to do with the high volume of drivers, some of them being relatives, who resided in Khadra. Coming from an American program, students were cautioned to be alert when taking these vehicles. There were true stories of entire auto-rickshaws of men sexually assaulting the lone woman (local Lucknowi women as well as foreign women). If you traveled in an auto from its originating stand, and if there were enough women, the drivers tried to keep the women together. From my experience in traveling with different women in Khadra, however, no one ever expressed concern about them. I think about Vikram and e-rickshaw drivers, ex-zardozi workers (and therefore close in understanding to most women I knew), as stretching the comfort that comes with being in one's environment.

Conclusion: Rehana's scooty

One year after I left the city, Rehana started fully working with Kadhai Ghar and was no longer affiliated with the Center. She was given too much grief for our relationship. They said that it should have been my duty to take care of her. I had left her behind. It was impossible for her to continue working there so she finally began traveling to the institute from our trip with Shabana so many months prior. Every month or so we sent voice messages through WhatsApp to each other. I also received bits of information through other sources. With the Covid-19 lockdown that came on March 25, 2020, the schooling at the institute was placed on hold. Rehana gradually shifted to working with an affiliated business where she was able to put her new design skills to the test. She was given more responsibilities as well as better pay. She was eventually able to purchase first a used, and then later, a new, scooty. With this scooty, she is no longer reliant on the Vikrams to carry her to and from work. I do not know if the scooty has presented a problem to others in the community or the family. In my time there, I saw very few

women in the area with scooties of their own. If there was money for such purchases, it was spent on a scooty or motorbike for the men, and even then, it was only if travel was necessary to work. I would not be surprised if some of the ladies from the Center were unhappy with the scooty. Some, like Beenish or Tahira, would most likely not be bothered.

I do not read it as an example of her stepping beyond her environments. For Rehana, the scooty is yet another tool for her to move within her environs, to work, and to do it even more comfortably. She has no need to worry about having the money for the ride back, encountering an abusive husband, locating Vikrams with an open seat to take her home, or finding a travel companion. If anything, this ensures that she gets home more quickly. When we talked about her working somewhere beyond the Center and the gapshap she was subjected to after I left, she reminded me that even if she found a new job, it wasn't as if she could leave the mohalla. She would not leave the community. The environs there were hers. She lived in them. Her family, her brother, a daughter, grandson, and others were all there. The environs are not spaces or places she could just walk away. They are home-sites, perhaps hooks' 'homeplaces', and she is oriented to them.

I think these shifts in space would have been very difficult for most of the other Center ladies to do. Because Rehana's husband was previously absent so much of the time, she was able to assert herself in these situations – she maintained the right to move in ways that she was already used to, reminding him that without her work, they would starve. For the other women, particularly the younger ones like Tahira, Beenish, and Yasmeen, such movement without a female relative beyond the bounds of Khadra was still difficult. The environment for younger unmarried women was restricted in ways the older, married women like Shabana and Rehana did

not experience. They could not proclaim that their family's survival was dependent on them working. Even then, there were plenty of nearby Centers.

In this dissertation I did not have the opportunity to compare the environments and movement of urban-dwelling kaarigars with those women working at the edges of the city and into the distinctly rural areas near the city. Tereza Kuldova worked with some of these communities who provided chikan to designers in located in larger Indian cities. Chikan kaarigars' travel into the interior of Lucknow from their out-of-station homes would open up new sets of questions about the relationship between women's bodies, space, and movement. Tactical movement for women who do travel such distances (and many of them do travel) would look very different from that used by the ladies at the Center.

Environments change and develop as do women's bodies, with them shaping in different ways to the environment and space. Women employed tactical movement techniques like gali-cutting or travel by Vikrams to move, as well as, at times, to stretch the bounds of what would be considered acceptable distances. Tactical movement is meant to allow movement as well as to make it comfortable. Not all cuts were necessary to move, but they certainly allowed women to feel their out-of-place bodies to a lesser extent. Women managed their movement by managing environmental expectations. Expectations were easier for women to accommodate and navigate around. Less reliable were male family members who would often restrict the women's movements in unexpected ways that seemed related to their own boredom due to lack of employment. Women regularly engaged in emotional labor to read and react to these moments, however by engaging in such labor, their own bodies bore a hefty burden.

How has modernity affected the movement and travel of women? In this chapter, modernity is marked by new vehicles for transportation, wide roads to travel upon them, and the

gender-marked public spaces that women often had to gali cut across. My walking description of these various spaces where men and women mingle and then separate made me feel a bit of the role of the flaneur, although more apparent than a male flaneur. This chapter has looked as instances when women's bodies were moving (not stationary) bodies 'out of place' due to markings on the body, such as gender, class, race, and religion. What happens in the spaces where women's bodies are present, and, to a certain extent, comfortable, their bodies are at ease, and they are shaped to the space while the space is shaped to them? What I discuss in the following chapter, however, is something that also marks bodies as markers of modernity but are presented on and in the body in a different way than the movement I have just discussed.

Chapter 2: Knotted bodies

> "Here I am trying to recuperate and politicize the uses of the body and the secret language of the organs…When I refer to the "somatic culture" of the displaced and marginalized sugarcane workers of the Alto do Cruzeiro, I mean to imply that theirs is a social class and culture that privilege the body and that instruct them in a close attention to the physical senses and symptoms." – Scheper-Hughes 1992, p. 185.

Embroidery work encourages an awareness of one's body as well as of others'; the amount of space one's body takes up, how close to hold the frame, the fatigue caused by sitting in one attitude. Nancy Scheper-Hughes argues that those who engage in physical labor are those who relate and communicate with their bodies, making these "somatic cultures." She sees those who partake in physical labor as being more closely attuned (Stewart 2001). While I do not agree that physical labor alone makes for a somatic culture, I do see different types of labor as influencing the relationship between oneself and one's body. This extends to a reading and experiencing of one's body in pain. A few kaarigars told me, by embroidering at the Center all day and practicing at night, I could understand some of that awareness and pain of those who I embroidered with. Perhaps it is the somatic nature of certain cultures that allows for or enables modes of intersubjectivity. While I was able to relate on some level to those minute and not-so-minute changes in the body from repeated stitching, other types of embodied pain and distress[57] were beyond my own experiential[58] grasp. There is a geography of labor and gendered expectations that I was not beholden to. Working days in the Center or afternoons with Rehana were constantly interrupted by discomfort due to the demanding bodily comportment, or health

[57] For the next two chapters, I will primarily employ the terms pain to refer to physical ailments and distress to emotional and mental issues; however, I see pain and distress as two sides of the same conceptual coin, and tightly connected to the embodied experience of the other. Pain causes distress, and distress causes pain. The purpose of this chapter is not so much to tease out the difference between these two, so much as it is to employ vernacular terms used by kaarigars themselves and to engage with them as signifiers. In psychological literature addressing some of those terms, I found these two terms used frequently and often interchangeably, or together.

[58] For Kleinman and Kleinman, they describe 'experience' as an "intersubjective medium of social transactions in local moral worlds…The flow of experience is not the product of a human nature (personality, instinct, etc.) but the condition for its emergence as both shared and culturally particular (277)."
Other ethnographers focusing sensorial and experiential include Robert Desjarlais and Nancy Scheper-Hughes.

problems endemic to the kaarigar Muslim working class, or familial and community demands for emotional labor (Hochschild 1983), or "*tenshan*" due to women's constant engagement in "emotional care labor." The cell phone was an important tether between women and this work. Pain is spatial, gendered, temporal, and political (Kleinman and Kleinman 1991), and it creates the "knotted bodies" of kaarigars. This chapter is an attempt to grapple with the ways social and bodily pain and distress interrupt the physical wage labor that is chikankari, and the weighty burden women must hold in suspension.[59]

My engagement with the body is a concern with physical pain and the physical side of emotional distress. The somatic nature of kaarigar bodies as I understand it in this chapter draws from the definition of "somatic cultures" by Scheper-Hughes and "somatization" by Kleinman and Kleinman. The former focuses on the heightened awareness to the body that comes with a close relationship to it through wage labor. The latter describe somatization as "the bodily mode of experiencing personal and political distress" (Ibid, 280).

Writing about pain caused by wage labor is to address the production of residue[60]; one being surplus value that adheres to the commodity, the other, pain, that adheres to the body of the producer. Once the commodity has been conveyed to the consumer or middleman, the kaarigar is left with the pain as the remainder and reminder of that process. It is the counterpart to the

[59] As Kleinman and Kleinman discuss in their 1991 article, "Suffering and its professional transformation: toward an ethnography of interpersonal experience," the question of how to describe social suffering. Psychology and anthropology interpret suffering as attributed to something else; a "professional transformation" occurs. They state, What is lost in biomedical renditions - the complexity, uncertainty and ordinariness of some man or woman's unified world of experience - is also missing when illness is reinterpreted as social role, social strategy, or social symbol...anything but human experience" (276).

[60] The residue of pain in the laborer's body differs from the residue Marx discusses in Capital Vol. 1: abstract human labor. Abstract labor is a singularity in the production of the commodity, and with that labor lies the division between use-values and exchange-values (abstract labor value). If abstract labor is what explains the significance of the commodity, I argue that pain, as well as its effects on the body, is what remains with the laborer after the commodity has left their hands. Marx's analogy of capital as a vampiric force is useful here. By looking at that same moment of extraction of energy and blood from the body, we may now see it as an exchange, with the installation of pain in the body. It is the remnant following extraction.

surplus value. It is what remains. This chapter is about the production and identification of a painful residue. The final chapter of this dissertation will address the management and processing of it.

To write about pain that is not my own is to write about unwritable things. Sarah Pinto employs a phrase given by an anonymous reviewer of her work, "language games," to describe her, at times, abstract writing that hints at absence (Pinto 2014). Wittgenstein discusses the inaccuracy inherent to language when it comes to explaining pain. In the case of other forms of pain, such as the violence done to abducted women during Partition, Veena Das gestures to the silence that women keep around pain within the depths of their bodies as home for it, and various ways that language is employed to give home to pain (Das 1997). I acknowledge the importance of such poetics of pain and thus rely on language and the body to communicate here. I will rely on the few words and terms the women employed to describe pain and distress, stories as they told them, happenings as I witnessed them, and phenomenological gestures as I partook in and experienced them. This chapter will address the physical pain and bodily comportment of chikankari, as well as the distress and somatic pain due to emotional and emotional care labor. At the Center, I saw emotion- and care-based labors overlap and compete with the embroidery done there, creating new sensations of stress and relief, and making it so that any serious analysis of pain and distress would be inadequate without addressing these various labors. I will attempt to show this through a series of written "interruptions" women encountered while working at the Center.

Interruptions represent the pressure for women to manage the extensive demands of their time and emotional resources, with much of this happening at the Center as well as at home. They are spatial, temporal, and gendered in nature. Women who worked outside of the home

frequently told me that it was impossible to finish the required work from home in a timely manner. The five women who most frequently picked up work at the Center to take home said it took them longer to complete. The reasons varied from a busy social schedule to keep up their networks, to young children and grandchildren demanding their time, to the lack of a daughter-in-law to help them maintain the house. Despite attempts to negotiate spatial concerns associated with working at home versus the Center (also, notably, a home), Center-based chikan kaarigars are barraged with phone calls and visits demanding their time. These interruptions, although expected to a certain extent, were disruptive and often emotionally draining. Once they were able to return to their embroidery, there was now the additional concern of the dwindling time left to complete their work.[61] In some cases these interruptions were welcomed as ways to take forced breaks away from their work; however, mostly, they were interrupted by issues that were, in and of themselves, disruptive. While much of this was care labor (household labor and childrearing), it was also what I am calling "emotional care labor," differentiated from the "emotional labor" Hochschild explicates in her work. This third type of labor will be the basis of this and the following chapter.

Ethical worldings create an ecosystem of emotions that live and breathe as they are felt and invoked through speech. A puzzle with pain is how then to write about and contemplate it, and to be aware of what the referents, or words, are actually doing when used as a short-hand to describe pain. In *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*, Elaine Scarry states that, "Medical research on the physical problem of pain is simultaneously bound up with the problem of language creation" (Scarry 1985, 23). I acknowledge this problem and attempt to

[61] To receive the maximum level of pay, 3500 INR per month (excepting Rehana who received 4000 INR), each kaarigar had to complete a certain number of motifs. That count came from a trial run to "set" the stitches for a garment. The woman reports back to Khala on how many motifs they were able to complete in one day. This number was multiplied by the number of workdays (Monday-Saturday).

address this in a few ways. First, this chapter relies on the terms I collected from my time with Rehana and her family, and the ladies at the Center. *Dard* (pain, hurt), *tenshan*, *pareshaani* (worry), *majburi* (compulsion), and *gham* (depression or sorrow). All of the ladies used these words most frequently to describe their experiences of pain and distress. The use of certain terms approximates their embodied experience. This much is clear in Nancy Scheper-Hughes' attempts to graph, chart, and illustrate her way to a better understanding of where the pain begins, to follow the symptoms, and to trace potential reasons for infant and child death in the area of Alto do Cruzeiro in Bom Jesus de Mata, Brazil. While I will not attempt to replicate her practice here, I do put each of these terms within a constellation of experiences in the lives of the ladies. While the list of terms may appear short, I use those which surfaced again and again.

Second, I do not see pain as beholden to only one form of labor. I argue that pain crosses the boundaries of productive labor to emotional labor to emotional care labor to housework. In the Center, physical pain was something we shared readily and openly. We talked and griped about the aches and pains we suffered through due to intensive, time-pressured (two things I never experienced except through fabricated pressures of my own making) *chikan* production. The ladies complain about aches caused by housework, such as grinding spices or burns from cooking, back aches and leg numbness from sitting too long. These compounding labors makes for what I referred to earlier as "knotted bodies."

Bodily pain communicates something extra. It is something more than the explanation of what the labor is, how it is done, what body parts are needed to do it, and other details. Maura Finkelstein's *The Archive of Loss* addresses this through the worker cyborg body in the shrinking weaving industry in Mumbai, with bodies breaking down as the out-of-date manufacturing machines break down too, both no longer of use. Sarah Pinto states that these are "impossible

stories [that] help us to interrogate structures for knowing" (Pinto 2014, 258). So, what is it that we don't know? Perhaps, we do not know pain. In stories of pain, there is always an experience of those on the outside (in this case, me, the ethnographer) of "missing it" (Ibid). The communication of pain through word will always result in "missing it." Sharing pain, such as at the Center or Rehana's house, would rarely involve actual attempts to describe the extent, quality, or acuteness of pain. Rather, the story of what led to pain was meant to convey these things without need for additional language; and the only way one could then take part in that sharing was by having come close to or directly experiencing it themselves. In the previous chapter I mentioned that Rehana would at times not tell me about some disturbing instances because she did not want me to become upset. I wonder how much of that was also her knowing that sharing some of those stories with me, rather than to circles of fellow chikan kaarigars from the community, would not have the same results. This decision led me to be excluded from the communal experience of sharing pain. Instead, I was an onlooker who was allowed to document their words. This documentation may have served a different purpose for them; not that my ability to record would change their experience in any way, but that I played the part of a witness (more about witnesses in the following chapter) beyond the circle of those regularly included. Therefore, I should be clear at the outset that some of these vignettes that follow were told to an audience, and not specifically to me. There was pain which I was included in. Typically, those related to the physical labor of embroidery, and I describe such instances in detail here and in the following chapter. But I frequently found myself "missing it" and trying to nail down "it." Physically painful moments had the added element of the financial pressure to complete their embroidery work regardless of the physical toll on their bodies.

I do not pretend that speaking their issues with me in the room meant to them what it meant to me. My writing about their pains does nothing to change their situations in life, their majburi, pareshaani, tenshan, gham or dard. These things remained while I was there, and they remain after I left. This chapter is about how I was able to view some of the somatic world they inhabit, and, at times, be welcomed into it. Rehana knew that I was an empathetic listener and that I cared for her. But I could not change anything about the facts of her abusive marriage, or the financial, communal, or familial *tenshan*s in her life. For a time, I was able to share aspects of a somatic culture with her. This formation of intersubjectivity gradually built up relationships based on empathy with the ladies I spent the most time with. The one thing that my extended research time in Khadra afforded me was that the ladies came to accept and to a certain extent welcome my presence (in part because it made things a little different for a while). But women shared their pains with each other, not with me. Rehana shared her pain about nearly dying from an exploding gas cylinder not with me, but with ladies from another center who knew about the dangers, could appreciate them and then, laugh about the event. She knew that such events affected me in a way that it did not affect women who experienced similar events. For her, there is no point getting sad about the everyday-ness of these ongoing trials. In the following chapter I will discuss the importance of the development of intersubjectivity through my interactions in Khadra and various places, and the likely impact that that had on my time in the Center. I find, however, there are limits to that intersubjectivity hypothesis, and some of those moments are most obvious in my act as witness to pain.

I think Lauren Berlant's phrase, "slow death," is an apt way to shift into my discussion of knotted bodies. It is the everyday "physical exhaustion" that leads to the body's slow and undeniable march towards death. It is the mundane as well as the remarkable that ushers this

process along. Berlant states, "when that experience is simultaneously at an extreme and in a zone of ordinariness, where life building and the attrition of human life are indistinguishable, and where it is hard to distinguish modes of incoherence, distractedness, and habituation from the deliberate and deliberative activity, as they are all involved in the reproduction of predictable life" (Berlant 2007, 754). The everyday communal and everyday private nature of pain is what drives this chapter. Sometimes this takes the form of gas cylinder exploding, small callouses on thumbs and middle fingers, other times, suicidal cuts and kitchen fires. How, where, and to whom kaarigars communicate that pain, to make it both "ordinary" and not. To approach pain and distress as being, at once, in an extreme as well as in a "zone of ordinariness" was a difficult transition for me to make both in the field and through the practice of writing. This chapter is an attempt to first, acknowledge that zone, and second, to disregard it. Did I do harm to my data, and to Rehana, by responding to supposedly ordinary happenings in a way that easily betrayed my subjective position as outside her zone of ordinariness? By viewing those happenings as out of the ordinary (to my lived experience, but not to hers)? The women did not want to be pitied for regular happenings in their lives. But by discussing them amongst those who had experienced similar painful and distressing moments, there was a call to witness, to listen to testimony, and acknowledge them as significant. Being an apathetic listener was something I failed at, and it most likely influenced the data I gathered, for better or worse.

Berlant also pushes us to think differently about sovereignty and agency; particularly through the distinction between "life building and collective living on," gesturing to larger and longer frames. Agency is operative in "spaces of ordinariness," placing agentive activities in a different light compared to in particular readings of 'sovereignty' (i.e. Foucault's biopower or Mbembe's state of sovereignty). Slow death is about the long game and "prospers not in

traumatic events…but in temporal environments whose qualities and whose contours in time and space are often identified with the presentness of ordinariness itself, that domain of living on" (Ibid, 759). The oldest kaarigars I met were in their 60s and 70s and began their work in their teens. Craft is a temporal environment. Berlant goes on: "I distinguish environment from event here not to choose a model of space over time but precisely to describe space temporally" (Ibid, 759). The distinction she makes between two temporal states, event versus environments, puts each of my vignettes in each chapter in a different light. Each story may appear to be a separate instance, referring to a specific moment (event) in time, and yet, their very happening refers to a temporal environment (pointing to a zone of ordinariness). There is an environ, to bring back a concept from the previous chapter, that influences how life gets lived, at times building and at times in attrition. However, perhaps different from the "environment" Berlant refers to, environs are built and maintained by communities, in part to protect it from (Islamophobic, political) environments that actively and passively encourage the attrition of the Muslim kaarigar community in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, and India in general. Both environment and environ have spatio-temporal qualities to them, with the former allowing a gradual decay of working-class communities and areas like Khadra, and the latter allowing only a gradual expansion of space and mobility as community and kin necessitate. Women's labor continues within these frames, with their knotted bodies becoming the sites of life-building and life-attrition.

Knotted bodies in a "somatic culture"

Knotted is maimed, disfigured, mutilated, injured, knotted. Something that is knotted can still work, although perhaps in an altered or compromised state. Knotted can refer to something that has a physically altered state. "Knotted bodies" is a physically embodied accounting for the impact of labor on the body. They are the visible and invisible additions to the lived body.

Kaarigar bodies become physically knotted, difficult to untangle, due to pain and pressure on particular points and joints on the body from the embroidering process. Older male and female kaarigars have knotted knuckles and fingers, thick with callouses, thin and ropey muscles in the fingers, wrists, and forearms protruding slightly. Their eyes take on new and interesting shapes, bumps, and colors due to cataracts from decades of work. The oldest kaarigars have glasses that look like magnifying glasses rather than spectacles, held together by aging frames, possibly passed down from another kaarigar. As I interviewed some old zardozi workers, I saw the effort it took to refocus away from a small patch of fabric. This is a part of any worker's story, the impact that work labor has on the body. A physically knotted body speaks about time and experience. Maura Finkelstein discusses the importance of these injuries and hurts in relation to the creation of a cyborg body to be read as an archive of work. She states, "This archive is carried in the body, under the skin, across the factory floor, and within the ancient machinery. The cyborg body is the archival space, and the files are experiences of pain, physical degeneration, and growing irrelevance" (Finkelstein 2019, 64). Physical anomalies of the kaarigar's body are proof of work in a difficult industry over a long period of time. Beenish told me they indicate a kaarigar as someone who does not embroider at their leisure. The scuffs and marks on their hands are signs of a body under temporal pressure to complete work quickly for full pay.

However, I understand "knotted" here to mean something more than the physically altered state. When I refer to knotted bodies, I see both mind and body as instigators and bearers of pain. Knots appear through knotted muscles and callouses, as well as knotted insides. The mind too must carry an object-like burden. A Cartesian distinction between mind and body does not work when engaging with the somatization of pain, and "somatic cultures" that experience

this pain. The body reflects the knotted state of the mind and vice versa. I add to this the description of somatization, the bodily mode of experiencing work-related distress. As kaarigars' bodies become the medium for language and communication, they become knotted. The body becomes inseparable from the labor due to these manifestations of knots. I do not see the existence of a knotted body as implying the existence of a 'normal body' that exists without knots. Knotted bodies may be different from person to person, or community to community, depending on the labor demanded.

Bodies may become knotted due to the natural or unnatural elements as related to labor. For example, kaarigar work is often subject to the available light or persistent (or intermittent) weather patterns. That reliance may be used to force labor even when those things work against the body of the kaarigar – work that happens with or against things like natural light. For embroidery work, natural light is the best light to work by; however, my experience of working with natural light during the winter was the intensity of a sun beating down on our backs and turning our cloth into a harsh whiteness, making it difficult to work without looking away often. If I had the space in this dissertation, much more could be said just about the interaction of kaarigars with their natural surroundings and the impact of seasonal weather on their work, although I do address some of that here.

Reading the body requires an awareness of "atmospheric attunements", of "attending to" "accretions" that tell us what is happening in the world. Katherine Stewart states, "It's an attunement to possibilities opening up and not necessarily good ones" (Stewart 2001, 449). But maybe the attunement to accretions points us in the direction of things that may come. The "attending to" shows us that accretions lead to possibilities. Katherine Stewart introduced the concept of "atmospheric attunements" as a part of Heidegger's "worlding", a spatial concept that

refers to a way of "dwelling" in the world.[62] I appreciate her use of the word 'accretion' to give a physical sense of layers, such as the layers I addressed in relation to environ. Attunements are a call to action in our practice as well as our analysis. It is to be aware and to write in awareness. What Stewart also makes clear about reading atmospheric attunements is the need to be aware of the geographic space. While in the field, I spent about 8 hours at the Center every day and then often stayed with Rehana or other kaarigars for a time after that. My body shaped its comportment to the different chikan-producing spaces by observing those around me. To stay attuned to the comings and goings of people, to the way people work, how their bodies respond to pain – these are seemingly overt practices, more easily noticed and noted compared to emotion and feeling.

In this dissertation, I refer to two types of emotional work: emotional labor and emotional care labor. I define emotional labor according to Hochschild's work, *The Managed Heart*, as the engineering or management of public emotions to a desired end. In the case of chikan kaarigars, they do not take part in a market of emotions, such as the flight attendants in Hochschild's work.[63] However, the author does not restrict her definition of emotional labor to this. It may also refer to those who moderate their external emotions, and therefore alienate the self from

[62] In *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*, Scarry states the following: "What is quite literally at stake in the body in pain is the making and unmaking of the world (Scarry, 7)." An interesting question to take Scarry and Heidegger is where does pain fit in? Can pain become world-making or world-breaking or both? If pain, or the slow death of bodies, is part of the zone of ordinariness, it can't always be world breaking. This is interesting way to think about how certain somatic cultures then deal with the expected regularity of pain because it is part of the world. But by constantly invoking it, discussing it, is that then an effort to make it no longer part of the worlding project?

[63] There has been an increase in non-academic and academic circles of the use of "emotional labor" to describe actions that go beyond those theorized by Hochschild. The latter responded to this trend by discussing the importance of theoretical terms to shift and change, but to keep the term restrictive so that it will still mean something when used.
Julie Beck, "The Concept Creep of 'Emotional Labor'," The Atlantic (Atlantic Media Company, November 26, 2018), https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2018/11/arlie-hochschild-housework-isnt-emotional-labor/576637/.

one's true feelings. Hochschild argues that the laborer (typically women) induces and suppresses emotion to a certain end (i.e., financial or emotional capital).

You cannot embroider efficiently if you're irritated or agitated. There must be a part of the brain that can look at the embroidery and not be upset (a difficult thing). I hesitate to call this a form of meditation because it is a state that comes when you reach a state of skill that allows you to exert your emotional or mental energies to other tasks. You cannot tug too hard on the thread and not expect it to snap. You cannot attempt to untangle the knotted mess of thread in the state it arrives to kaarigars. Pulling aggressively or with frustration only makes the whole process last longer, forming tighter and more difficult to loosen clusters of thread. I have a distinct memory of attempting to pull single strands of *kaccha*, or raw, thread from such a mess without success. Shabana grabbed it from my hands and calmly pulling the desired number of strands, instructing me that I must relax in order to do the deed, while holding the two ends of the hank taut. For new learners like myself, my initial frustration with stitching could be read through my interactions with those first few pieces of fabric and thread. I fight against the embarrassment I have for my own earlier, poor work and keep the pieces for posterity; but, also to remind myself how my embroidery and emotions towards it changed over time.

Based on my experience, this is what, in part, makes embroidery so difficult, to maintain a relatively neutral emotional space where one's hands are concerned. This allows accuracy, focus, and speed, all of which are important to complete the necessary number of motifs for the month to receive the maximum amount of pay (3000 INR). The emotional space should be blank (even though it rarely is). To maintain this, Hochschild would describe this as emotional labor; as the alienation or management of one's emotions. She states, "This labor requires one to induce or suppress feeling in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper

state of mind in others…This kind of labor calls for a coordination of mind and feeling, and it sometimes draws on a source of self that we honor as deep and integral to our individuality" (Hochschild 1983, 7). In the beginning of training, it was difficult for me to embroider and focus on anything else. Once my speed and accuracy increased, I found it was easy to multi-task. My hand could keep moving without pausing to focus on the conversation. There is a limit to this. Emotions have the potential to interrupt embroidery.

Emotional care labor is to emotionally engage in certain issues and happenings, some short-term, some long-term, that involves a sharing of emotional burden with other individuals. I don't see this only as acts of empathy or sympathy. It is a form of care labor; here, that I define this as care by emotion. It is often unplanned and disruptive emotionally, as well as to one's embroidery work. Even though there are matters that the ladies expect to require emotional care labor, it is important to account for the emotional nature of that work and its toll on women's bodies. It is laborious not because a kaarigar alienates themselves from their own feelings such as Hochschild suggests with emotional labor. It is laborious because of the compulsion to engage in emotionally taxing work to care for those in their kin and community networks. This is not undertaken by all women, nor as extensively as Rehana engages in it. There is an acquired and taught skillset that lends certain women and men to this labor over others. Rehana was adept at it and it has ensured the continued survival of her family.

There is an exchange, and an expectation that those engaging in it will be similarly supported and emotionally recompensed. Visiting when someone is ill, loaning money, exchanging information about job opportunities or about physicians or treatment, praying for speedy recovery or continued wellness, crying, touching, grasping, embracing; these are some examples of what I saw and was a part of. When someone is clearly being stingy about sharing

information or emotion, there is bitterness. When Shabana and Beenish neglected to tell their fellow Center workers about a training and work opportunity to make a bit more money, the others took this quite personally. It was a sign of selfishness and lack of care. Khala was even put off by it. She said, why would they keep such opportunities private when they know about the financial distress, worry, and tenshan that everyone else goes through. To find out about it after the training already began was hurtful. While this episode could be interpreted as a financial betrayal, my experience of it was as an emotional one. Emotional care labor was financial.

While these more tangible displays of emotional care were easier for me to account for, the intangible were, for Rehana, more difficult to bear. Rehana held her own and others' emotional distress and pain in suspension within her body as a form of emotional care labor. I argue that the result of this state of suspension is what the kaarigars I worked with call "tenshan." They use the Hindi/Urdu "tenshan" from the English word "tension" instead of the Hindi/Urdu word *tanao*.[64] Tenshan is a commonly used term throughout most of South Asia (at least in India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka). Its uses and definitions vary somewhat, depending on region, city, country, community, and situation. What makes it so popular amongst such a diversity of people is its flexibility, its ability to be adapted to a certain situation that a group of people can appreciate immediately. It is temporal in that tenshan comes from the inability to move forward, to progress or resolve. Laura Ring points to "this nonresolution of tension – the maintenance of social tension embodied in the tenshan of the gift not yet returned" (62). This lack of resolution is key to understanding the mental and bodily pressure of tenshan.

[64] The Hindi/Urdu word 'tanao' is from the Sanskrit-derived word 'tanaa', meaning "stretched", "pulled tight", "spread." A similarly embodied experience. My impression of 'tenshan', however, is one of pressure or weightedness instead of thin-ness.

Time remains uncomfortably stuck, and Rehana must hold the matter at hand within herself. Tenshan comes from a constellation of issues that must continue on, unresolved. Sarah Pinto's work about women, psychiatry, and madness in *Daughters of Parvati* highlights this temporal aspect of tenshan by stating: "In every case discussed here are such asymptotic processes, unfinished movement in tension with the finality it reaches for" (258). Tenshan is for the future. Tenshan manifests in furrowed brows, headaches, and tangled tummies. Thinking and worrying too hard about what is happening and what may happen. It is insidious in that sometimes it interrupts work, and sometimes it sits in that quiet emotional space during embroidery work where it festers and grows.

The creation of knotted bodies is a process steeped in the political, social, cultural, and laboring state of those bodies. Kaarigars are intimately connected to these spheres of life. The communities are located predominately in Old Lucknow and most of the individuals I worked with are Muslim. In the introduction and conclusion to this dissertation I discuss the political backdrop of my research, particularly the implementation of the GST tax scheme in Jul 2017, and the demonitisation of Indian currency in 2016. These two events, in addition to the general Islamophobic rhetoric of the current BJP-run government with Narendra Modi as its Prime Minister, since their inaugural year in 2015 up until the present of 2020, continue to impact the lives of Muslim kaarigars. My interactions on these points were full of anger, resentment, resignation, and sadness. Rehana's younger brother, Zakir, who lived on the second floor of the house was a prime example of what happened to generations of zardozes, previously busy with work, and then suddenly without. Their employment impacted the women I worked with because it was common for households to have zardozi and chikan workers under the same roof. Conversations at the Center and Kadhai Ghar often centered on how useless (*bekaar*) men and

zardozi are. It was considered unwise to marry a zardozi kaarigar (a relatively new feeling amongst the community). Women were frustrated by the lack of employment for their men. It often meant more time for drinking the money women earned from chikan, and more time for men to see where the ladies in their family went and perceive what they did all day. The previous chapter addressed some of the physical and verbal manifestations of these stresses.

From the beginning of 2019 stretching into 2020, India experienced a series of events that impacted the political scene across the country. Protests against Kashmiris took place in response to a bomb blast in Pulwama on February 19, 2019, by the Pakistan-based Islamist militant group, Jaish-e Muhmmad. Further protests in response to the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) began in Assam and then traveled to major cities in India, especially those with significant student populations. These continued until the country locked down on March 24, 2020, due to the coronavirus pandemic. For kaarigars in Lucknow, the protests were interruptions to work and life, deemed as harmful to their families as the motivating factors for the protests themselves. Muslim kaarigars kept to themselves and attempted to continue work as normal. For those who had to travel beyond Khadra for that work, they were worried that, caught up in a crowd and identified as Muslim, they would immediately become a target for violence.

"Knotted bodies" point to all of these factors by addressing the emotional and emotional care labor, and physical toll on the body of the kaarigars I worked with. My intention here is to engage with these political and social factors as interruptions, as well as facts of living in Khadra as a Muslim kaarigar. I describe them as interruptions because of how I witnessed women experience them while attempting to complete the requisite amount of chikan to bring in a necessary wage. I see these labors as gendered. They impact women uniquely compared to male

family members. To understand the labor environment of female kaarigars, these factors and the pain associated with them, must be considered.

The Center

The term "center" refers to more than just the physical building or gathering of women doing chikan. It is an indication of a higher quality of work. "*Center ka kaam*" (Center-based chikan work) had a specific parlance in the industry as of 2018-2019 when I was in Lucknow. I specify the dates because the meaning has changed over the years. Centers were previously exclusively referent to training centers, typically based in National or State Craft Award winner's homes (such as Khala's home). The Government of India distributes these awards on an annual basis along with the Shilp Guru Award for master craftsman of all varieties.[65] Khala told me that her mother was a National Awardee, as was she.[66] One of her two sisters (both also embroiderers, running their own "centers" although not funded by the government) was a State Award winner. The National Award comes with a number of perks. Recipients (of State and National Awards) are put on a list which the local craft offices hold (for Lucknow, located in Aminabad) should a consumer or designer approach them for kaarigar recommendations. They win a pot of money that no one remembered the amount of. It was immaterial to the prize that kept giving: money to open a "training" center. The proposed purpose of these awards is to

[65] The All India Handicrafts Board was founded by the crafts guru and activist, Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay, in 1952. Originally intended to be a median between kaarigars from all over India and the government, over the year the board was increasingly weakened, and finally dissolved by the Modi regime in 2020. She instituted the National Awards in 1965. More about Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay may be found in Reena Nanda's book, *Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya: A Biography,* Gerladine Forbes' *Women in Modern India*, and one of Chattopadhyay's own works, *Handicrafts of India.*
Vincent, Pheroze L. "Boards That Gave Artisans a Voice Scrapped." All India Handloom Board and the All India Handicrafts Board scrapped - Telegraph India. Telegraph India, August 7, 2020. https://www.telegraphindia.com/india/all-india-handloom-board-and-the-all-india-handicrafts-board-scrapped/cid/1788527.

[66] There was another mother/daughter duo of National and State awards in the area. Rehana and the daughter told me they were responsible for teaching many of the women (including Rehana) in the neighborhood how to many of the stitches.

recognize the superior work of craftspeople in India in upholding and furthering their craft, and a part of this meant teaching the upcoming generations to become skilled kaarigars. The amount of actual training that happened in these centers seemed to ebb and flow, depending on who came knocking on their door to learn. According to Khala, the funding lasts only 6 months, so these are not permanent training centers. This meant that, at least in her case, teaching was liberally mixed with labor. When she did not have money from the government to train, she operated a "center" where, instead of training, the women worked on whatever orders she received. These orders typically came from large, high-quality chikan shops located in Chowk. Customers coming from the local craft office were often redirected to Khala's center. Sitting in the room in Khala's home, we watched multiple big-city folk from Delhi and Bangalore come through to see the workers and submit an order. Beenish told me that some of the orders were for one-time use in TV shows and the like.

The term "center" is now synonymous with quality chikan work, and less with government-funded training through awardees. There are a few centers in the neighborhood behind the College. Some had a steady influx of work through a particular boutique while others hung on by a thread, operating only when there was enough to sustain multiple women for at least a few months. During a trip to the printer with my host mother and Rehana, the printer asked Rehana what kind of set-up she worked in. He said, now, "*centerwala kaam*" (center-type work) was really the best quality you could get now, but it used to be even better. Anyone could say their work is "centerwala kaam."

The Center was in Khala's house. After my journey from my home in Mahanagar, I arrived in Khadra. Khala's home, like most in the area, is a cement building, "*pakka*" (fixed, permanent), not "kaccha" (raw, impermanent). The prevalence of pakka buildings conveys a

history, even if no longer present, of relative financial stability. This goes for most of Khadra, an area primarily composed of kaarigar families. Khala's home was painted a bright blue. Many of the homes were painted in similarly bright colors. The entrance was a single wooden door that was almost always open. To encourage their son to "do something" instead of hanging out with bekaar (without work, therefore useless and troublesome)[67] guys in the area, Khala and her husband turned a room downstairs near the door into a small shop from him to tend. The door stayed open always after that.

Khala would also have drop-in visitors sent to her from the Crafts Council. These were big city folk (i.e. Delhi) in search of a decent chikan work for less than boutique level prices. This meant slicing the money that went to the numerous middlemen, shop boys, and shop owner, resulting in garments for about half the cost. She wanted to appear as always open to do business with whoever so happened to stop by. Sometimes unwanted guests also stopped by, such as the dogs, who interrupted work for a few minutes.

An interruption of dogs and the smell of death

The only time the front door was closed was to keep the dogs out. The Center was in a standoff with a dog on death's door. It was probably in search of a place where it could die in peace, away from the taunts of the neighborhood children and the roughhousing of the other dogs. This situation with the dog peaked at the end of October. These few sentences from my fieldnotes: "For a few days, one particular sick and starving dog would sneak into Khala's house for cover. But the dog smelled like death [in the words of Beenish] so they would chase it out. One day I asked why when the dog seemed to be seeking a bit of refuge. Beenish said, "If dogs

[67] The most common complaint the ladies had against men was their inability to find regular work following the decrease in zardozi jobs. They were bekaar as was zardozi. To be bekaar was to be worthless, without financial stability, and to fail to do anything to change that state of being.

are here then the angels won't come."" Dogs are generally considered *haram* in Islam. Cats were preferred pets. I noticed several stray cats around the neighborhood, like in Rehana's house. This dog was smart. The door did not close fully, and he would just nudge it open with his nose. To keep this from happening, the last person to open the door placed a brick on the inside of the door to weigh it down and make it difficult for the dog to open. I expressed my dismay at trying to keep a dying animal outside at the mercy of bored children but could understand the desire to not repel any angels. The ladies relied on their prayers to just maintain life as it is. To welcome a dog, even if it was injured and dying, was to invite trouble and more interruptions.

An interesting second piece of information I received about angels was their connection to food. I didn't understand the importance of angels until Beenish pointed out the number of reasons it was important to cover one's head in different situations. Naturally one doesn't want to drive angels away for a number of reasons, but one of them is that their absence (created, for example, by the presence of the dying, diseased dog) makes a vacuum for devil-type figures to inhabit the house, as well as the body. At lunch time I was instructed to cover my head while eating because if I didn't, this devil would swallow my food and cause it to not reach my stomach, leaving me hungry, substance-wise and spiritually. Since life is hard enough as it is, it was better to have Uncle (Khala's husband) just chase the dog out the door.

Episodes such as these were not painful embodied experiences but rather were regular reminders about the need to reserve one's empathy and emotional care labor practices on certain situations and living beings. These were instances of slow death that were dismissed. The dog was something that could potentially cause pain and problems for the ladies and Khala. For me, I viewed this as an example of the regularity of death. Pain and death that interrupted chikan work was not always one's own nor worth expending energy on. Death itself was not a distressing

event. It was always there. Particularly in the short lives of most of the animals in Lucknow. My host mother kept cats around her home, but never allowed them inside. One of her daughters had bad allergies. Every year or so, there would be a litter of kittens to the sole surviving cat. And every year those kittens died off within the first few months to dogs, monkeys, illness, and cars. Litters of puppies often met the same end. After one such death, one of the daughters said you had to keep yourself from getting too attached, or caring too much. Chances were the animal would die quickly. Interruptions took the form of not just one's own pain or the pain of the ladies, but that of others. Pain and distress in this chapter and in the lives of the ladies were focused on the embodied experience of humans, particularly those immediately around them. There was little space to take in other knotted bodies.

The Center continued

After going through the front door, passing the tiny shop room on the right, there was a narrow, steep concrete set of stairs. Like most Indian homes, the center of the house was open air. This was especially useful during the hot, pre-monsoon months. A second set of stairs led from the second floor landing to the roof. Set back behind the ground floor set of stairs was a room where Yasmeen and her sister rented for most of the time I was there. A dark toilet with a dubious set of wooden doors was next to the room. Yasmeen and her older unmarried sister lived together away from her father. He lived and worked in Hyderabad as a zardozi worker for a madam who owned a boutique of some kind. She said this madam was very kind and took good care of her father. He was able to visit just for a short time during Ramzan until 'Eid. They spoke to him on the phone every day. Yasmeen insisted that her working at the Center was not a financial necessity. Her sister also worked, but as a ladies' tailor. Because of their lack of male family members in the area, they rarely went beyond the boundaries of the mohalla. Even though

they were alone, the environs influenced their movement. Yasmeen traveled beyond the mohalla only when her elder married sister stopped by to visit. Otherwise, the two of them kept to their room behind the stairs on the ground floor of Khala's home. She said it was difficult living. There were intense screaming matches when the Center closed. It seemed this was the reason for her dwindling appearance upstairs.

Up the stairs, however, was the life of the house. Ascending those stairs was a room to the left, the Center, where the ladies worked. Next to and perpendicular to that room was a small open-air kitchen. To the right of the kitchen was the nice bathroom which the family used and recently anointed with white tiles. On the wall opposite the center was the bed-slash-living-room. This was where the family slept, with half of the space taken up by a huge bed. The other half was an empty space surrounded by comfortable chairs and sofa along opposing walls and an expansive wardrobe set into the wall. This was where Khala entertained customers and other guests. Also, this was the only room in the house that had an air conditioning unit.

Shifting back to the Center room, this is where the bulk of the stitching took place, and where I spent most of my hours with the other women. The doors stayed open during working hours. This allowed some movement of air. There is one window opening up to the center of the house. It is located above shelves set in the wall. Because of the positioning of the window, the upper half of the wall, we weren't able to see who was coming and going, but it did provide additional light. Two "tube" lights on opposing walls would have been sufficient lighting, but Khala forbade the use of both. Too much energy, too expensive, she said.

We weren't always aware of the activities that went on outside of the center room. Fights were easy to keep track of but deals with customers were made in lower tones. Khala did not keep the ladies informed about the orders, who they were for, how much money they would be

sold for, or how much the customers paid for them. A woman came to the center from Bangalore to place an order for a few pieces, lightly embroidered dupattas with just a few *butis* (flower buds designs) tastefully scattered. These kinds of products were very much in fashion with the upper middle class and upper class consumers in big cities; wearers of "ethnic wear" typically produced by popular non-profit organizations employing village women. To interact with this person, I left the room and requested to come into the room where she and Khala were talking. When I returned, the ladies asked what I had learned.

A small wooden bed fit snuggly against the far wall under a storage shelf. We sat on a thick beige woolen woven rug spread across most of the remaining floor space. Depending on how many people were present that day, it was often a struggle for all of us to fit on the rug. The cement was hard and cold and not an option. There were two prime spots: seated while leaning against the wall or against the bed. Sitting for multiple hours crouched over our frames without back support was taxing work. The rug somewhat eased the pain of sitting on a hard and unforgiving floor. In the beginning the ladies would try to make room for me in one of the spots. Not long after we were better acquainted, they stopped asking. I was young, and, as Shabana reminded me, at least I didn't have to go home to cook and clean for the family after work. I should have more energy than everyone else to sit upright. Touché.

Majburi

> "The women have a complicated relationship to the center and chikan work. [Shahana] said she doesn't like chikan. [She does it] because of *majburi* (her daughter that is)." October 22, 2018

Rehana often took on work outside of the Center or additional work from Khala to supplement her income. The other ladies did this too. After working at the Center, Rehana returned home, made chai, stitched, made dinner, and stitched, often until 2 o'clock in the

morning. Other chikan kaarigars confirmed this as a regular practice. Shabbo, a woman from a different group of workers, stated that she would stay up late working until everyone fell asleep because there were too many interruptions. She didn't mind it though because the interruptions were also important; guests visiting, family members to see, dinner to make, and children to play with. For Rehana, poor lighting in her home was a constant concern. Because of how her house was situated, she could not take advantage of sunlight during the day. Nights were intensely dark. Her home had two tube lights, but one was always needing to be replaced and the cost to do so (around 200 INR) was too great. Back at the Center, she complained about the strain on her eyes from stitching late into the night. Tahira responded that if it caused her so much pain then she should stop stitching so late! Rehana's exasperated response: "Oh child, if I don't stitch then how will household things get paid for?"

In the beginning of my research I asked kaarigars the question of why they do embroidery if the result is pain and injury. Not a great question, but it did open up the space to discuss the word "majburi." Used by many embroiderers I interviewed, majburi refers to the compulsion and the lack of choice in doing a certain labor. Majburi is pressure, and, in their case, the pressure was often financial. The way kaarigars used majburi was often straight forward. If there was another way to ensure financial stability, they would take it. If their husbands made enough money, they wouldn't have to embroider chikan. Not all felt majburi in the same ways. The younger ones – Yasmeen, Beenish, and Tahira – were not quite so financially reliant on working everyday as the older women. They had fathers, brothers, or uncles who brought in most of the money.

One winter day at the Center, Shameen made her annoyance about this known. As the only divorced woman, she was in a tenuous state of having the majburi to work in order to

provide for her daughter. She lived with her brothers' families and mother, but her daughter's schooling and material needs were her financial responsibilities. That day we were sitting up on the roof. Winter days on the roof in the sun were lovely and a bit breezy. Sitting down in the Center room was chilly and dark. The first person to arrive would drag out the worn woolen rug and up to the roof to save our lower portions from freezing on the gravelly concrete. At one end of the rug, Beenish and Yasmeen were having a separate conversation about plans for the cooler weather. The former stated that typically in the wintertime (January to the end of February), she opts to stay at home because her fingers get too cold to work. It's too difficult to stitch quickly. Beenish and Yasmeen formed a bit of a squad, so this news worried Yasmeen, that she may have to work alone for the months to come. In some regards, they (with the guest appearance of Shabana) were the morality police, often ganging up on Tahira when she called her boyfriends. Yasmeen felt emboldened by Beenish's presence (and her seniority in the Center) to speak more often. Without Beenish there, Yasmeen felt like the odd man out of the group. Listening to their conversation, Shabana became grumpy and passive aggressive. Without naming any names she said vaguely, "Some people come [to the Center] only when they want. But I actually need the money, so I must come." Whenever Shabana makes such comments, the other ladies tended to ignore them rather than engage her and possibly cause a fight.

Shabana often talked about how she despised the work and was a victim to her majburi; however, majburi does not convey the range of emotions embroidery work stimulates. Pride in work and pride in pain complicated majburi. Pride in doing beautiful, well-stitched motifs sits alongside the feeling of majburi. There is also the powerful feeling kaarigars referred to of doing work taught by a family member and by your ustaad. What to do with such complex emotional ties to labor that leads you down a path of slow death? If embroidery is not just about majburi,

then what specifically about the work is compulsion? The pressure is not simply in the embroidery itself but rather in saying yes to the terms of that work and the way the industry operates. Majburi is when workers become abstract laborer who are forced to submit to a capitalist framework of production. Their work becomes fetishized. Their hands as separate parts from their bodies are sold as part of chikan (Chapter 3). Piya Chatterjee refers to this as a "feminized habitus of labor," leading to "fetishisms of both labor practice and commodity and the cultures of consumption" (7-8). It is appropriate that majburi has a weightedness to it. It is a burden that contributes to tenshan. How to carry all of these while maintaining the delicate balance, without dropping all of the moving parts?

Majburi is heavy and constant. It is something that requires regular maintenance to carry lest it get even more difficult to bear. While the outcome of majburi is often financial, the source may not necessarily be financial in nature. Shabana's daughter is a majburi that leads her to make certain decisions ensuring her care, maintenance, and survival. Much of that work is financial. To carry majburi is often a form of emotional care labor. To bear a majburi is may be closely related to bearing environ within one's body and movements. This is not to say that environs are always heavy, but they could be. Communities, mohallas, environs, and families exert their own pressure that result in majburi on individual bodies. It settles heavily on the mind as well on the shoulders. It is easy to imagine majburi in an embodied state that is reflected in the hunched over position a kaarigar assumes to embroider. "Majburi" is an answer to a question of why one would do something that goes against bodily and mental welfare. Why do chikan kaarigars continue working into the night after everyone has gone to sleep? Majburi. Why do they often work through the grasping middlemen who take a percentage of their wages? Majburi. To the printer in Chowk, majburi is the driving force behind the continuation of the chikan

industry. Without majburi, women would have no need to do chikan. While I don't agree with that opinion, it does indicate the significance of majburi to the ladies. It was the willingness to accept certain conditions that they otherwise may not if they had more power over the circumstances of production. Each of them feel it differently. I wonder if Khala felt majburi to let me continue on at the Center, regardless of her concerns about my loyalty.

A note on Center learning

My learning how to embroider chikan, and I mean *really* embroider, was a bit contentious. Khala's fear, a weekly struggle at times, was that I would learn all of the stitches (32 by contemporary standards), steal her best kaarigars, start my own center, and train more women with my skills. My close relationship with Rehana, exacerbated her worries. I did my best to dispel her fears, but she was always a bit dubious of my presence and interest in learning as much as possible. I tried to point out that my regular attendance, even after I had mastered most of the stitches practiced there, should indicate my interest in her Center and the operations there, and lack of interest in starting my own. Despite my protestations that I had no nose for or interest in profit-making ventures, I was never able to fully convince her of my non-duplicity.

Rehana told me that following my departure, Khala regularly questioned her about if she had started working for me.[68] I mention this as a background to my interactions at the Center because it influenced the way I was taught, at times under cover. This is not to claim that this would have (or have not) been the case for any teacher. I met other kaarigars willing to teach me at their centers without the need of subterfuge. Khala's fears were based in a volatile and competitive industry that kept her family unit in a state of financial precarity. She could no longer embroider to support herself due to a cataract surgery years before. The industry had

[68] She also taunted Rehana that I had "abandoned" her and that I should have taken her with me or given her a job.

knotted her body, leaving her entirely reliant upon the ability to hire, and in some cases, train women for the Center. In a way, this spotty learning experience was closer to how most of the ladies at the center learned chikan, picking up a few stitches here and there, from different women and centers in the community.

An unfortunate side effect of my work was the suspicion I caused by working with Rehana. Khala witnessed other white women (and elite Indian women from the cities) come through Khadra, picking up the best chikan kaarigars for their own purposes, leaving those responsible for producing for the domestic market in worse shape. Khala had worries about many things, but the ability to keep her small group of highly skilled workers was always on her mind. The Urdu word used for these worries is "pareshaani," and they were a regular part of conversations in the Center.

In the cases I mention in this chapter and as I heard about them in Lucknow, the quality of the burdens carried by female kaarigars differed greatly, affecting if and how they chose to communicate them to others. Majburi was a fact of the nature of embroidery work. As one block-printer said to me, "If these women didn't have majburi, chikan would no longer be around." While I and some of the ladies I worked with would most likely disagree with that statement, it does convey the sense of compulsion to work through the Urdu word. Majburi was generally not something that women offered up information about nearly as much as the other terms I discuss in this chapter. It was not at the heart of communal discussions around pain, but it was ever-present as one of the most common culprits of pain. Without majburi, the physical deterioration of parts of their bodies would lessen. Significant is the shift here in the feeling of majburi which is a personal weight to carry, versus the weight of pareshaani, which can be carried and shared with others. Majburi is, in a sense, a personal weight to carry, added to the pile and leading to the

manifestation of tenshan. Majburi was always there to do certain things, behave in certain ways, abide by the environ, work when you were ill, or work past the time when everyone has gone to sleep. I do not know if there was simply a futility in bringing attention to majburi, and, therefore, was granted less breath to share with others. The following section about 'pareshaani' shows that this pain-inducing weight operates in the space of the Center and home in different ways. It is something that spurs emotional care labor.

An interruption of pareshaani

One day after lunch, everyone returned to the Center. Rehana looked awful. She was clearly upset about something that had just happened. Everyone started asking what the matter was and she began to weep. She kept stitching as Beenish tugged on her frame to get her to stop. We couldn't get a word out of her. Eventually, she divulged that someone who loaned her money two months ago called during the break to get their money back. The argument was heated, leaving Rehana in a distressed state. As she cried, Beenish and the others bemoaned the continuous presence of pareshaani in her life. "She never even lets it show!" But now it's all coming out, Beenish said. Rehana had no money to pay this loan back, or any of the others before that. Hearing the commotion, Khala came into the room to investigate. She and Rehana went into the other room where they discussed Rehana's situation and an advance on her pay so that she could pay back the other woman in part. This is what creates a continuous state of debt and pareshaani. To end one pareshaani, a new one must be created. The psychological toll of a constant state of indebtedness cannot be overstated. Tenshan in part comes from ruminating on debt and the occasional, startling calls from the loan-giver. Multiple pareshaani combine to create a knotted state. Headaches, dizziness, stomachache, and light-headedness turn emotional distress into a paining body. This was not the first or last call Rehana received from a loaner. A

couple weeks before my departure, everyone was returning from lunch and Rehana looked upset. Someone had called her daughter to recover a loan for 10,000 INR.

Pareshaani interrupts work. Wilkinson-Weber points to this emotion as something that "frustrates" the "process of learning through the expansion of mental abilities, as well as the honing of physical powers…In other words, while shauq [passion/interest] is deemed fundamental to chikan embroidery by all who know it well, continuing to do it depends, to some degree, on continuing pareshaani" (Wilkinson-Weber 135). These pareshaani as Wilkinson-Weber indicates are closely related to the majburi to continue. Pareshaani is both a thing and an emotion. It both points to a particular thing, event, or situation that then causes the emotion itself. Rehana and others frequently used the plural of the word, *pareshaaniyan*, rather than the single. Rarely was someone likely to discuss just a single pareshaani. There were always many pareshaaniyan to point to.

Pareshaani interrupts work, and the distress that comes as a part of pareshaani, in turn, interrupts work. In the face of and because of pareshaani, work must continue; however, when the act of embroidery creates an emotional and mental space to ponder, pareshaani has the power to debilitate. Pareshaani had the ability of interrupting work but the opposite was also true. In order to distract oneself from pareshaani, work in the company of others was the best option. Shameen provided one example of this. She was one of the regular but infrequent embroiderers at the Center. She was middle-aged, unmarried, and living with her brother and his family. She had multiple health problems that often kept her at home. One of the root causes seemed to be diabetes. This is a common, often undiagnosed, health problem I saw that in Khadra women. For Shameen, unlike some of the other women in the area, she did have the money to see the doctor and purchase insulin. Her most frequent complaint, besides her creaky body and diabetes, was

her nightmare of a sister-in-law (*bhaabhi*). Shameen was made to fend for herself in her brother's household as an unmarried sister and was thus a threat to her bhaabhi's power over the home. She held an unstable position, in some ways nearing that of a guest. She did not seem to be dependent on her brother in terms of permissions to move about, but it did seem as though many of her health-related purchases were reliant on her chikan income.

During the first week when I met her, she was mourning the recent loss of a beloved sister (who was a gifted kaarigar in her own right) with whom she had clearly had a close relationship. At the Center, she wept and talked about how wonderful and kind her sister was. Every once in a while she had to put down her frame to cry and dab her eyes. The women around her bolstered her by claiming that now she was with Allah and she was no longer living in pain. But Shameen felt alone and vulnerable without her sister. They talked frequently on the phone. Shameen also lived with her sister off and on. Who was there now to care about her well-being? Who would be the witness to her pain? Surely not her brother or bhaabhi. She and her sister ensured each other's emotional care. During a conversation about the decision to work at the Center versus home, she made the following statement: "If I were to sit around at home, then I would only think about my *pareshaani*." Worry. *Pareshaani.*

Shameen highlighted the geographic aspect of pareshaani in relation to her troubles. For her, the fear was that there is too much empty time and empty space at home. Each home is different in this respect, but her concern was to be alone with her thoughts and worries. The heaviness associated with pareshaani was too much if there was no way of distracting oneself with embroidery and the other ladies at the Center. Even if you suffered the loss of a beloved sister, at least at the Center you were surrounded by empathetic women who appreciated the importance of female companionship, camaraderie, and the task of sharing one's emotional

burden. This selection of one space and its associated pain over another is a decision that I saw women make all of the time. What place had associations of what type of pain and how they felt at any given moment, caused them to wish they were elsewhere. Shabana was the most vocal about this. Frequently, she (and the others) said, "*Aaj kaam nahin lag rah hai.*" "I'm not feeling the work today," or "The work isn't sticking (lit.) [to me] today." If Shabana or any other kaarigar said this it was usually to explain why they were unable to focus or were stitching at a slower rate than usual. Her frustration and anger at having to be there and do the work that made her body uncomfortable, that gives her pain in her head and eyes, was intense. Moments later Shabana would temper herself, saying that at least the work meant that they could all gather together and share in the discomfort through the art of lamentation.

A common statement I heard from women was "*khaali haath nahin bethna*." The literal translation is "to not sit empty-handed." Don't sit idly. This could be anything such as darning, embroidering, knitting, cutting vegetables, peeling garlic, dusting, or sweeping. My first beloved host mother, Najma, was proficient in the art of not sitting idly. I often found her leisurely slicing onions or *hari mirch* (green peppers) between her thumb and forefinger. She watched cooking shows with a notebook and pencil, ready to take notes. If students were at the table doing Urdu homework, she sat at the table with us reading one of the many books left by students. I have an excellent photo of her reading from a large tome entitled *The World's Religions*. There is a great deal of pride in living without waste; without wasting time, materials, energy, space. Rehana's daughters took some old clothing and stitched it into pillowcases. This was previously a common practice in families of all incomes and stations. A woman in her 60s told me about the art of recycling bits of cloth in her childhood, to create things like pillowcases, bed sheets, tea cozies, small towels, and on and on. Women of certain generations and communities place importance

on this constant micro productivity. Chikan kaarigars never have an excuse to have "*khaali haath*", or empty hands. To sit idly put you in danger of having to sit with pareshaaniyan and ruminate on them. For Rehana, Beenish pointed out, to keep them to herself made them worse.

Sometime in February Rehana left Khala's Center and began traveling to a new center in Chowk. She complained that she began to feel ill and light-headed, most likely due to the high levels of pollution in Lucknow that year.[69] She decided to quit the center in favor of taking bits of work as they came. She could finally live the dream of working and relaxing at home. Prior to this decision, she and the ladies often talked about the preference to embroider from home. There they would be at leisure to work when and how they wanted. I took this in part to mean that there would be fewer expectations of them to appear to be constantly productive.

At the Center, Khala would occasionally pop her head in the room if she heard too much laughter. Shabana said to me, "She hates it when we sound like we're having too much fun." This wasn't entirely true all the time. Khala would often come and join us. She understood the importance of the Center to kaarigars as a place to escape pareshaani, such as husbands and financial instability. Khala had her own fair share of pareshaani in the form of cataracts, two children with disabilities, and a household that depended on her entirely. The fact that she did not even have her own skills as an embroiderer to fall back on weighed on her heavily. The weight

[69] "Lucknow Ranked Ninth Most Polluted City in the World, Says Report." Hindustan Times, March 6, 2019. https://www.hindustantimes.com/lucknow/lucknow-ranked-ninth-most-polluted-city-in-the-world-says-report/story-RwUJN6oj4rJ6luSvCkR8cP.html.
"Lucknow Air Quality Index (AQI) and India Air Pollution: AirVisual." Lucknow Air Quality Index (AQI) and India Air Pollution | AirVisual, Accessed May 25, 2021. https://www.iqair.com/us/india/uttar-pradesh/lucknow.
Mohana Basu et al., "India Reduced Air Pollution by 10.7% in 2018, Lucknow Most Polluted, Finds Study," ThePrint, July 28, 2020, https://theprint.in/environment/india-reduced-air-pollution-by-10-7-in-2018-lucknow-most-polluted-finds-study/469630/.
Wu, Jin, Derek Watkins, Josh Williams, Shalini Venugopal Bhagat, Hari Kumar, Jeffrey Gettleman, Rumsey Taylor, Leslye Davis, and Karan Deep Singh. "Who Gets to Breathe Clean Air in New Delhi?" The New York Times. The New York Times, December 17, 2020. https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/12/17/world/asia/india-pollution-inequality.html.

of pareshaani stacks up like weights on the shoulders of women. The fact that women vacillate between wanting to be at home and the Center is not surprising given that each space represents unfinished labor, causing and relinquishing pain associated with the other space. As Shameen experienced it though, pareshaani and house space went together. Even if the pressure and presence of pareshaani followed you to the Center, at least there was work and there were other kaarigars to distract you from it. During Rehana's illness, she remained at home and seemed to enjoy being there, at least in the beginning. After a few weeks, she was ready to get out. I wrote:

> It seems Rehana's time stuck at home being sick has changed how she thought about possibly working from home. Today she was complaining about the women who sit at home, do nothing, and just talk [about nothing] all day. She was also saying she hates sitting around with nothing to do. Clearly the idea of the home as a magical space where productive work and relaxation can happen is no longer there for her. She wants to go back to [the new center].

Even in the minds of the kaarigars who enjoyed being at the Center to get away from the pareshaani that awaited them at home, the desire was always to be at home more. But comfort, in turns out, was always something just beyond their grasp. Home-based pareshaani may be put on hold at the Center and by embroidery, but then came the pain associated with work. The techniques of the body (Mauss 1973) needed for embroidery overtook the body.

Chikan tools of the trade

Early in my time at the Center, I had a conversation with my mother, a craftswoman in her own right, about the need for spectacles and the general eye dard (pain) problem. She sent me large magnifying lenses used by crafters in the States. The lens has a rope to loop around your neck, and a stand props it up on your breastbone. This allows you to then place the item under the glass and work. It also includes a little LED light for low-lighting situations. I was dubious about if the ladies would be interested in it. Kaarigars are very specific about their tools. They have their own frame, needles, cutters, and carrying receptacles. To add a new tool not

commonly used by other kaarigars would be difficult. They all said they would take one when they arrived, but when I brought them to the Center, they were reluctant. The first complaints were that they weren't in the habit of it yet. But then, Rehana picked it up and tried it out. Eventually the others warmed to it, using it primarily at night when their eyes were weak, and the light was gone.

The tool (*aozaar* in Urdu) here would appear to be a simple magnifying glass. The tools of the embroiderer include thread, frames, needles, cutters, and fabric. And bodies. Each of these components are necessary for the production of chikankari. What I find interesting about these tools is how they interact with and get in the way of each other. The interaction causes wear and tear. I point to the body of kaarigars as a tool because it assists in the production of embroidery. The women treat body parts as tools. Toes, feet, and knees are for unwinding massive skeins of thread. Mouths and tongues are used to prepare the thread. Eyes are to ensure the accuracy of the needle. Fingers guide the needles to their target. Bodies were also casualties, sometimes getting in the way of, instead of enhancing, the stitching. If fingers are not properly placed, needles prick them. If multiple women work together on a single large item, you could be a casualty of a fly-by needle. Shabana was an especially exuberant, bordering on volatile, embroiderer. I usually sat across from her. Her needles flying at my face were a source of mirth and prickling pain, only sometimes resulting in bloodshed. We had to laugh at our bodies getting in the way. Wrap up the prick to ensure tiny drops of red don't fall on the fabric. These were small wounds from physical labor-related body regimens that are proof of one's status as a kaarigar.

Chikankari is a style of embroidery produced primarily in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh (UP).[70] In prior iterations, it was referred to as 'white-on-white', white stitching on white fabric. The 'white-on-white' days have long since passed, leaving in its wake an embrace of different types of colored fabrics (cotton, *mulmul* (similar to muslin), georgette, silk, synthetics) and stitches. At the Center (and now in most production centers of chikan), the dhaga (thread) most commonly used is the embroidery floss (referred to as "*anchorwalla*", "the anchor one", after the Anchor brand of floss) commonly used in Western and European embroidery. This is a replacement in the past twenty to thirty years of India-produced threads called *kaccha dhaga*. This type is made from the "slob" excess which is expelled from the cotton fabric production process. Thin and irregular but considered by old and new kaarigars as giving the piece a more pleasing aesthetic. It sets into the fabric nicely, giving an integrated or raised appearance to the design. The difficulty lies in teasing apart the thin strands without leaving the bunch in a knotted mess. Shabana and Rehana told me "*Mushkil se nikalta hai*," "[Strands] are extracted with difficulty." The Center follows the rest of the industry by using "anchor-walla" thread.

Sitting in the Center, we worked from a long, thick skein of thread. In the beginning I brought my own small skein from a local shop that sold everything a woman might need. He sold the real small skeins of "Anchor" thread, not the knockoffs used by kaarigars. Before I arrived in Khadra, I read and heard about abusive middlemen and shop owners who carefully counted thread given out to women so as to make sure they did not use that thread on other pieces not

[70] Chikan is a style of embroidery which, according to state (Uttar Pradesh) and national governments, is located only in Lucknow. The veracity of this claim is considered by all in the industry, dubious. However, in an effort to keep the quality high of local crafts and products throughout India, and to ensure that the true producers of those items are supported, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry implemented Geographical Indications (GI) Tag system in 2003. This is to prevent products made outside of assigned regions from being labeled as the real deal. Chikan, according to this scheme, exists and can be produced only within Lucknow city limits. A seller cannot sell a product as "chikan" if it was made outside of Lucknow. One of the visitors to Khala's Center was a woman from Bangalore. She was starting up a concept store with products only abiding by the GI tag scheme.

going to that store. I heard some women keep every little stray piece of thread to then use for side projects. In the women-run centers I visited or the middle-women who doled out work, I saw no evidence of scrimping and saving thread to put aside for later use. Khala distributed entire skeins freely and made no note of who took what and how much. The same was the case at another neighborhood center run by a woman named Raziya. This may have something to do with the price of thread decreasing. The women knew about bad practices by middlemen such as beatings when pieces weren't finished on time or counting threads. The ladies in the Center said they were grateful to work for women. What do men know about this work anyways.

Anchor-walla thread holds six strands, or *tar*s, which the kaarigars must separate out depending on how many strands (typically 2-3 tars) that center used. First, a woman would unwind the skein from the twisted length it came as, into a large loop of thread. Fully extended, the width of the thread was similar to that of a clenched first. Pulling the loop apart with the assistance of another woman or between one's knees, you needed the thread to be held taut to cut through with the usually small and inadequate shear-style "cutters". After sawing and hacking away at the thread, the thread was separated into bunches for each woman. This could be a bit taxing so the more experienced young kaarigars, Beenish or Tahira (or Shabana if she was feeling up to the task), tended to do this. To separate the bunches, Beenish held one end and Tahira held the other taut to separate. To pick out the number of strands to embroider with, Tahira took her bunch, wrapped one end around her big toe while pulling on the other end. The creation of tension was important so as not to create a messy tangle. The same process holds true for kaccha thread but took at least double the amount of time, patience, and frustration. There was no point in getting angry with the thread. It would only increase the time you spend on separating thread. Each woman had their preference of how long they wanted the working

thread to be. Some preferred short strands which made quick work because the working arm had less to travel. The downside is that you must replace the thread more often. Shabana liked her strands long, hence the many times I was stabbed by her errant needle.

The Center used three strands of thread for their work. Jaali was the exception to this. Jaali required a strong single thread to tease apart the warp and weft of the fabric to create elaborate latticed designs from gathered threads in the fabric. Shabana and Beenish said three-stranded work is not too thick, not too thin. It was possible to produce respectable work without it being called *mota* (thick, fat, coarse, not fine). Raziya from the other center employs her kaarigars to use only two strands, creating a more nazuk (delicate, fine) effect. Beenish and Shabana said that the aesthetics of two *tar* work was pleasing but very harsh on kaarigars' eyes. One of them described it as "*aankhon ka kharch*". The cost of eyes. "There's only this in sight: in our sleep, in our dreams. Weakness in our hands. Our hair falls. After working and working there's this, only this."

Wrapped up in this discussion about strands of thread at Raziya's center was a bit of gossip (*gapshap*) and pain. Raziya is Beenish's aunt on her mother's side. In the previous chapter I mentioned Beenish's mother who struggled with cataracts (*moti bil*) and wore extremely thick glasses, and Beenish's own struggle with eye pain, or dard. She used to work at her aunt's center where she did two-stranded work but eventually had to leave due to the strain it caused on her eyes. The timing was fortuitous, Beenish said to me. Khala had recently re-opened her center (about six months before my arrival), making the transition from Raziya's to Khala's Center quite simple. This shift resulted in hurt feelings and newly surfaced "tenshan." Beenish did not want to talk about it, but the other ladies were more than happy to gossip about it when she left early for her tuitions. Poor Beenish, they said, she only left because the pain in her eyes

was just too much. Even though Raziya paid her kaarigars more, in everyone's mind it wasn't worth the price of their eyes. Shabana insisted that three-stranded work is perfectly respectable, and that two strands was just too much of a sacrifice on their bodies. Raziya demanded more from her workers. Everyone told me she was a very nice lady, but their bodies would breakdown more quickly if they worked too long in that center. This was a balancing act, straining your body to get the most wages possible, but not too much lest it break down before its time. After Khala's Center petered out in March, Beenish had to return to her aunt's center for a time. Her family was apparently on better terms after her return but who could say how her eyes felt about the arrangement. Rehana told me the Center reopened after I left, and everyone was back.

Eyes and dard

"Dard" is the simplest of the words used to describe pain. It is the residue from a capitalist production process. In the Center, it is a catch-all term for pain in any part of the body. It is not specific to a particular type of pain – throbbing, stabbing, aching, gradual. "*Dard hoti hai."* It hurts. "*Dard bahut hai*." There is a lot of pain. Dard refers to pain that strongly resonates in the body. Dard in the back or stomach or legs or head or eyes. It refers to pain caused by both external and internal forces. Dard in Rehana's body often led to distress. It interrupted her work, causing financial hardship from a slower or unresponsive body. During these times when her body did not behave as it should, I found her at home, doubly distressed (depressed?). Such is the case with the most delicate of working organs: the eyes.

Eye dard was particularly troublesome because it forced the women to halt their chikan work for a few moments, days, weeks, years, often leaving women with permanent eye damage. Other parts of the body pained as work went on, but eye dard was work-ending. Yasmeen, the youngest in the group, and Beenish were particularly susceptible to this. Yasmeen often skipped

work due to intense headaches caused by eye strain while working. Tahira complained loudly if the light coming through the window was too weak. These bouts of dard were exacerbated by poor lighting that changed depending on the season and weather. On rainy days, heavy clouds blot out any sunlight. But if we worked on the roof in the sun during the winter months, the bright sun on our white fabric was blinding. Shabana complained and bullied the others (or attempted to) to get them to move downstairs so her face and hands would not "become black" (*kala*) sitting in the sun. The younger ones then complained that it was impossible to see their work downstairs in the wintertime, daring and challenging her to leave work for the day over the dispute. Rehana and I would roll our eyes at each other.

As we worked in the Center room (per the norm), I would catch someone put their frame down and then press deeply into their eyes with the heels of their hands, leaving bloodshot eyes, slightly closed. Once a headache came, it was nearly impossible to continue working. Sometimes Shabana and Rehana brought out pairs of hand-me-down glasses previously made for someone else, if the dard became too much to continue. After a period of time in the Center, I asked them if they would be interested in visiting my friend who sold spectacles but most of them were unsure of getting permission to travel beyond Khadra. So, all except Rehana were left to use their spectacles as they were. Still, better than nothing was the sentiment.

To choose dard, to be at the Center, was in part to choose one pain over another. Every kaarigar in the Center knew that doing this work had certain physical discomforts and pains that came along with it. Which was harder to handle? Pareshaani or dard? There is not consistent answer to this question. The ladies were always looking to escape physical pain, but they often commented on how being at the Center was a way to escape the pain associated with home and the people in it. Dard in the legs, the back, the eyes, the stomach, the fingertips, the shoulders,

the tailbone. Was it perhaps about the ability to act on physical pain in a way that one could not resolve the distress and tenshan that came with the non-physical troubles? These troubles certainly had somatic effects on the body. A note on the use of dard: it was typically employed to describe pain from physical ailments; not the somatic impact of the non-physical.

A winter day of work, monkeys, and sickness

I'm sitting on the hard, cold cement roof of the Center. It is uneven and uncomfortable, so someone brought up the woolen rug. It tempers the floor but, per usual, we don't all fit. The available roof space is U-shaped, wrapping around the staircase opening, and we're sitting in the narrow dip of the letter. The larger portion of the lopsided-U is taken up by a large wooden, dilapidated *takht.* It's a multi-purpose hip-height platform. Khala and her husband just washed their recently received *atta* (wheat grain) "ration." They placed a jute tarp over the takht and lay out the atta to dry. This is the second time they're washing and drying the atta. The first time, a few days ago, one of Khala's sisters, Sanno, noticed what appeared to be animal shit. We laughed about it. Khala did not. Today she and Uncle are trying to dry the atta again after a thorough re-wash. They just gave us strict instructions to chase away animals. What with the monkeys, birds, cats, and occasional child interrupting our work, it's difficult to keep an eye on everyone.

The feeling on the roof is jovial. We are, at least for the moment, not restricted by the dull, white-washed walls. Up on the roof we can see everything. It's wintertime, which makes sitting out here possible. The sun is bright, making it difficult to look at our stark white fabric. Shabana is complaining about how dark she'll get unless they go downstairs. Instead, she demands someone leaning against the wall in the shade of the little storage shed to switch spots with her. Regardless of her complaints and the bright sun, it is fun being up here. The other day a

bunch of monkeys hopped on the roof and startled us. One plopped down next to me and spirited away a piece of *mithai* (sweet) I was saving for lunch. Uncle gave us an old rusty pistol that seemed to be missing some important parts. "It's to scare them away!" he said, also handing us a *danda*[71] to jab at the monkeys. After the one stole my sweet, I took possession of the firearms and promised to protect everyone with my (lack of) abundance of experience. During the winter months, life shifts to the rooftop. Most buildings in India lack basic insulation making the indoors often colder than the outside. A young woman with enviable lengthy tresses is on the roof next door, preening, much to the chagrin and disgust of the Center group. The ladies never keep their hair down, although they always implored me to, saying it suited me. Khala's baby niece and young nephews come up to visit throughout the day. The boys fly the occasional kite. We can see other chikan ladies embroidering on their roofs like us. Interruptions can be pleasant. They often force us to look up and away from our work. There's more chatter sitting in the sun. More to distract us.

Death and illness are pervasive, too. Another distraction. They interrupt our pleasant interruptions up on the rooftop or down in the cold Center room. While the two are constant throughout the year, the winter season and hot season before the monsoons are the worst. I've noticed that week an increased number of announcements from the masjid around the corner. These are not the *azan*. I ask Beenish about it. "They're death announcements." There seem to be a lot this winter, mostly elderly members of the community. Some of them they recognize. The speaker quality is terrible. I couldn't understand the voice, so I relied on the ladies to tell me who had died. Later that day I wrote this:

[71] A large wooden stick or baton typically used for disciplining by the police.

> A lot of people in the area are getting sick and dying - the ladies blame the cold as the culprit - there are more frequent announcements of death by the local masjid…These announcements of death interrupted our stitching. They pause to express surprise or dismay that such-and-such person had passed, once or twice commenting that they had seen them recently. I don't recall if they claimed this to be unusual to this winter. I gathered that it was common considering that they pinned the blame on the weather. The changes in the seasons [are] so drastic and sudden that with each shift [came a shift] in health.

I remember the announcements come loud and often. Someone's name is given and the day (usually the same day).

These announcements during the winter remind me of the bells tolling in *Death Without Weeping*, signifying to Scheper-Hughes the death of, potentially, another child. She describes a conversation: ""Why do the church bells ring so soft?" I asked Nailza de Arruda soon after I had moved into a corner of her tiny mud-walled hut near the top of the Alto do Cruzeiro. "It's nothing," replied Nailza, "just another little angel gone to heaven"" (Scheper-Hughes, 268). The sound is a normalized backdrop to everything that leads to that moment of child and infant death. The announcements were, at least, more personal, with the name of the deceased and the time and day they passed. The voice over the speaker in Khadra was not treated as an unusual or unexpected interruption during the cold season, but they did give us pause every time. The winter months, December through the middle of February, were difficult. All of the ladies lived in "pakka" houses, but without insulation. The cold penetrated the buildings making nights and sleeping, getting up in the morning, out from under the *kambal* (heavy quilted blanket), miserable. I noticed that most of the homes I visited had kambals, although they were often a bit worn, flat, and deflated looking.[72] Rehana had a similar one. I noticed during my walks to the

[72] To heat the room, electric coil heaters are typical, or, for those who could afford it, heaters that blow hot air are also common. The coils are the best at generating heat but are not the safest. I had one while living with my past host mother, Najma, and during a mid-day nap, woke up to find my quilt burning and near flames. Terrified, I placed the coil at considerable distance from my bed. Sleeping areas like Rehana's, however, were a bit tighter, placing flammable materials closer together.

Center the existence of shops that stuff (possibly re-stuff?) such kambals. Shawls were the preferred source of warmth.

December was the time that Rehana and I started spending more time together, often at her house drinking tea, gossiping, and stitching. During one such visit, Rehana apologized that she had run out of cooking gas and had to resort to cooking on a questionable-looking hot plate, in the shape of a hexagon, with tightly bound heated coils filling the center. Instead of the expected two-pronged electrical cord there were two stripped wires, the metal bits inserted into the wall plug, one wire for each hole. It was a small item that I saw in most people's houses in the area. It was a quicker way to make small things like tea, especially if the gas ran out. They helped in heating up a room too. Most people used these sparingly because they were dangerous; prone to starting fires. Rehana had been using hers for more than a week because she didn't have the 1,000 INR to refill her gas cylinder. I gave her the money and she refilled it the next day. I found out months later that she and her family had barely eaten during that time without gas. Cooking any kind of food on those heated coils was too difficult. The winter months brought the precarity of life into sharper relief, especially if something went wrong.

Death was expected in the winter and summer. But during the months I was there, the seasons seemed somehow harsher than in previous years. This is even within my memory of living and studying in Lucknow from my first summer in 2008. The increase in pollution made the extremes in weather even more difficult to bear. The announcements were interruptive reminders that even with the expectation of death, the number had increased. They were mostly elderly members of the community, Beenish admitted, however, there shouldn't be this many of them. Death is normal, but should it be this normal? These were not strangers. They were residents of the mohalla and even while the announcements increased, we still paused a few

moments to repeat the name of that person. These moments were just a couple of years before illness and death that would become even more pervasive with the coronavirus.

Body regimens and transitions

When I started learning zardozi with Asif, he said he was worried that the new shape my body would have to take would cause undue pain and discomfort. Rehana and I laughed. She pointed out that my body was accustomed crouching over a circular frame. What's the difference in crouching over a large, square wooden frame? I would find out that there was enough of a difference to feel it in different parts of my shoulder but her original meaning was well-taken: I was, by this point, used to discomfort in my neck and shoulders caused by working in one attitude over a long stretch of time. Earlier I discussed the use of many parts of the body to perform various stages of the preparation for embroidery. Here I will continue that discussion of the body in situ, particularly in relation to spatial and temporal concerns along with the tools that make this work possible.

This trade, as most kaarigar trades, relies in most part on youngsters growing up having watched their family members and others in the community working in a karkhana type of environment or from home. Learning how to stitch by watching is the primary way of teaching. For this reason, whenever I asked for tips or how to better my skills, I was usually told to just practice. With time, I would improve. And when I did improve over a lot of time, Khala or Rehana would say, "*Dekho*!" Look! This is how things work! I mention this embodied learning experience again because it is related to the gradual adoption of body regimens that most kaarigars adopt. There is a way that things are done, sometimes to the detriment but sometimes to the benefit of the body.

I enjoy working with my hands. Growing up, my mother was constantly working with hers; torching thin rods of colored glass to create blow-torch glass beads to be strung on elaborate pieces of jewelry, knitting with two long needles and yarn, sewing and embroidering our dresses. I went through phases of reorienting to my hands and then stepping away to books and then back again. I did not realize that by focusing on embroidery that I would again reorient like an obsessed person to my hands and the things they create. Most evenings during my fieldwork were spent perfecting my embroidery skills. At the beginning of my time at the Center, I was given homework by my teacher which I was, initially, not too excited to complete. This changed suddenly. I cobbled together a hand-sewn bag from fabric scraps which became the container for my projects. A small zip bag held my cutters. A double-sided, stitched piece of black fabric held extra needles.[73] I brought my embroidery out at every opportunity in hopes that if I improved my technique, I soon be able to work on pieces with the ladies (this did, shockingly, happen).[74] My fingertips grew rough and calloused, my eyes grew accustomed to the strain (a disturbing transition to experience), and I grew accustomed to using all parts of my body (fingers, toes, lips, teeth, mouth, and knees) to do the various tasks necessary for chikan work. Before starting my field work, I became obsessed (again) with knitting. When I arrived in Lucknow and began learning chikankari and zardozi, this inclination to work with my hands shifted from two long, blunt needles to a sharp, silver one. My body quickly molded to the new

[73] The ladies lost their needles constantly. This happened as women prepared a new batch of thread for use. The needle buried itself in the swath of fabric and no amount of shaking brought it out. We often came across the needle at the end of the day, sitting exactly where it had been carefully placed, or by women pricking their hands on the fugitive needle while packing up the garment.

[74] When I did eventually get to take part, it was not to replace another girl's place or take potential work from the others. The women were required to finish a certain number of motifs per day. Shabana was happy enough with my capabilities to fill in little bits that she did not have time to complete. I offered my finishing services to others, but they were, understandably, not interested in mixing their hand with mine. Each embroiderer's work is recognizable. The way certain stitches and motifs are stitched read almost like a signature. By introducing my hand into their work, that signature was disturbed. Shabana was concerned with finishing her work more than some of the younger women because her and her daughter's continued sustenance depended on a regular and dependable income.

rigorous training I imposed on it. My eyes pained, my neck strained, my fingers hardened and cracked. The ladies too were interested to see these changes.

One day I started to notice a change in my fingers; very subtle changes that clearly came from holding a thin hard needle between my thumb, pointer, and middle finger. My callouses saved my primary working fingers from bleeding whenever I pricked them (a constant in the early days of my stitching). I also noticed that my middle fingertips were looking quite ragged and knotted. They were peeling and cracked and painful. For my Fulbright Research talk, I referred to the left one as my 'wounded middle finger.' It takes the brunt of regular pricking as I shoved the needle through the cloth with my right. I pointed this change out to Rehana and she responded, "*Aap ki bhi chiil gayi* (Yours has also peeled)." I thought that this was a sign of my newbie chikan kaarigar status. As the icky state of my finger progressed even further, I again showed it to Beenish. She said most people have it. Some don't, but they're the ones who don't have the pressure of time and production. This temporal pressure (i.e. abstract labor time) results in the production of a painful residue. Callouses, cataracts, and glasses are some of that.

I later found out that this wounded middle finger has always been there but has evolved as the tools of the trade evolved. I was chatting with a woman, Nasreen, who comes from one of the old middle-class families of Lucknow. They would classify themselves as from a Muslim shareef class. We were at a village estate with other people from a non-profit I worked with during my fieldwork. I had taken to bringing out my embroidery at any moment I had some spare time (as some of us were having a drink in the sun, a man from this group would call this behavior "inappropriate", and doing the "wrong thing at the wrong place and wrong time"). Nasreen and I sat (and I embroidered) with a small group of women. She pointed out that the use of the embroidery hoop was some new and fangled and produced sub-par work. She said, "I

never worked with a frame. I can't hold it properly. I do it the old way, wrapping the fabric around my finger. Work goes very slowly that way." Following up on that comment with another chikan expert, Paola, I was told that this was true, and that a callous still formed on the middle and pointer fingers, but the peeling wound formed on the knuckles. This way was also how Shameen's deceased sister had embroidered. These minute details of how embroidering body parts bore the brunt of physical labor told different stories about training and purpose. To wrap the fabric around the knuckles was considered a sign of an old-style kaarigar who had great skills, time, and patience. However, women who no longer had the leisure time to work by wrapping the cloth took up the frame. Their small and circular fabric-wrapped iron frames were tools to increase speed (although not necessarily accuracy).

In the beginning, my body felt the effects of embroidery quite intensely. I felt dizzy from staring continuously at the same square section of cloth. This light headedness came to the fore when I stood up to go home. My lower back and shoulders ached from lack of movement and sitting in one attitude. Inexplicably, I was exhausted when I left. One day I walked to Shabana's home and she said, "Don't you get exhausted after this work?" She followed this up with a comment about how strange it is to feel this exhaustion after sitting.

What concerned and fascinated me was the ability of the body to quickly grow accustomed to the strain, leading you to feel that there was no damage being done. As I trained in zardozi with Rehana's nephew, I also spent time with the zardozes at Kadhai Ghar. Transitioning back and forth between zardozi and chikan I was aware of the different effects the work had on my body and the comportment required for each style. In my field notes I wrote: "The younger zardozes say that pain is only there when you first start, but then your eyes grow accustomed. They take little breaks here and there. Chikan ladies say this too but when you come across

women and men who are older and have been at it for 20 plus years, most complain of weak eyes, needing to wear glasses, and having surgery. The younger ones think they're just blessed with good eyes; but maybe it is a slow and steady deterioration over time that can't be felt and therefore is more dangerous. A slow death of the eyes. The illusion of the eyes being ok. I remember the ladies being a bit surprised that I needed glasses considering how young I was and that I had not been forced to do eye-straining work. They were dubious when I said that not everyone is blessed with perfect vision. Rehana's sister didn't understand what the problem was with people as she had grown up learning chikan but had never needed glasses. Rehana pointed out that unlike herself, her sister didn't have to continue working. She had Asif who made good money in Saudi and bought a nice house for everyone to live in. Emotional care labor in the shape of financial investments is, for Rehana, tightly connected to her decisions about what embroidery work to take, how much, and from whom. She (and others I met) chose to put her body in more compromised positions to make more money. This usually meant working until 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning and with access to limited lighting. This was common, fitting well into the zone of ordinariness I referred to earlier. Typical body regimens are a part of a spatiotemporal environment that causes a slow death march, making bodies knotted. A shift now, to another view of the influence of time, first, and then space.

An interruption of illness, gham, and tenshan

> January 27, 2019: "Raz was pretty depressed today. I asked what was wrong. She said nothing, but eventually she said sometimes all of the "tenshan", aka financial and family problems, makes her depressed."
>
> November 14, 2018: "I asked about Rehana since she didn't come in. Beenish said her daughter's son is sick. I asked about her issues at home. She said, "Well she is under a lot

of tenshan, a lot of pareshaani [worry]. Tahira made a side comment "What do the issues at home matter. What's the point in asking if they won't tell you?"

Before I attached myself to Rehana, my encounters with her gave me an impression of someone quiet compared to the chatty group of Shabana, Tahira, and Yasmeen and Beenish. She generally kept to herself, stitching quietly unless she was in a high-spirited mood. She was always worried about some family matter. She rarely shared her pareshaani but everyone in the Center knew she had many. Flipping through my fieldnotes, I wrote comments during her most distressed moments, that she was feeling tenshan, feeling the pain of holding onto tenshan. She had headaches, no appetite. I knew these things about her from the very beginning before our gradual intimacy. But it was an intense thing to eventually be drawn into her anxieties as I spent more time with her. During a bout of illness, I was at her house where she was resting instead of going to the center. I was there to socialize and check in on her and for a zardozi lesson with Asif. I described my sadness over her poor health, and this was his response: "Yes, she's sick, but you know what she also has. *Gham* [Depression or sorrow]. She worries too much about everyone." The next day, I was interviewing her brother, Zakir, who had been out of work as a zardozi embroiderer for years. He had no other skills for work, no start up cash to start something of his own[75], and a wife, and daughter with a mental disability to take care of. During our chat he expanded on Rehana's (and his) state. "*Tenshan ka koi ilaaj nahin*. There is no cure for tenshan."

Around this time, Rehana began to go through intermittent phases of ill health before crawling back to something resembling decent health. This went on for a few months. She lacked energy. She had no desire to eat, and then lost weight. During the months of uncertainty, her

[75] Soon after this Rehana approached me about a scheme to help him. She asked if I would be willing to invest 10,000 INR for him to start a small store right outside their home. I did and that seems to have sustained him. The impact it had on decreasing his tenshan and distress was astounding.

gham deepened due to her lack of energy to stitch and lack of appetite to eat. Some days it seemed she bounced back from whatever illness she had, but she would eventually slip back into a low energy state. After many months of uncertainty, she was diagnosed with a hypothyroidism and diabetes. Both seemed to have an impact on her gham; partly due to the physical side-effects of those conditions and their medication; partly due to the emotional trauma of having such serious conditions while living in a constant state of financial instability. To take care of her lack of appetite she was also prescribed medication to make her hungry. This only partially addressed her appetite problems.

After Rehana was diagnosed, I was relieved. She could take her health in her own hands instead of waiting for things to happen to her. She would have medicine that would allow her to be productive again. I figured that the gham was mostly a side-effect of hypothyroidism, and that a great new job would sort out the tenshan! Rehana was not relieved. This was a life sentence to spending more money she did not have to ensure that at the very least these specific conditions would not come in the way of her productivity. Zakir and Asif's diagnosis of tenshan and gham as separate from her illness (and without cure) and related to pareshaani better explained her situation. Her thyroid medication and insulin were not cures, merely reprieves from the dips in energy she experienced due to hunger and an underactive thyroid. The pills and shots gave her the energy to be a productive kaarigar. Gham and tenshan and pareshaani would still be there. As would hunger and debt.

The two terms used to describe Rehana are closely related and describe the emotional care labor she often partakes in. To feel gham, according to Platts and Fellon's dictionaries, is to feel grief, sorrow, lamentation, and, notably, care. Therefore, to feel gham is to feel for another, to be a part of a redistribution of emotional weight. Gham in an embodied state reflects a

condition of being down, of feeling a lack of motivation to do anything. Gham could come from pareshaani, a constant worrying about the state of things. The cause of this feeling could be anything. For Asif, he connects Rehana's gham to her tendency to care and think about others, to feel pareshaani for them and on their behalf. It also comes from her pareshaani about hers and her family's survival, and threats pose a risk to that.

Gham and tenshan are interconnected in this case. The feeling of gham can lead to tenshan. While gham reflects an emotional state, I see tenshan as coming from an awareness that to address gham, or pareshaani, or dard, is difficult, or maybe futile. To gather tenshan from others, however, is an act of emotional care labor and seems to negate the idea that Rehana would have considered it futile. It was an action which she could do. The awareness is that to move forward, to attempt to resolve them, creates the need to hold those feelings and the problems attributed to them in suspension. Similar to the English word 'tension', the Hindustani word 'tenshan' is similar to the definition of 'taut,' to feel stretched, extended, tight, or strained. When she was enveloped in tenshan, Rehana found it difficult to muster the energy and the will to drag herself to the Center. A few times I visited her house when she wasn't at the Center to get her to leave the house, to convince her that just being there around other people might make her feel better. No amount of cajoling or offers of leaving the house would help. These spells of gham and tenshan are similar to the migraines my host mother suffered from. You needed to wait them out, but the hint of the next one was somewhere waiting in the wings. A call from someone she borrowed money from was often enough to breathe life into the cure-less tenshan.

The ladies at the Center were not very good at taking care of their own health. Those who needed the cash the most were at the Center most days during Ramzan. Something happens in March. It's as if someone turns the heater on and rather than keep it at the same level, just keeps

turning it up. The heat comes so suddenly and with brute force. This unfortunate event, in 2019, paired with Ramzan in the middle of May. The timing was truly tortuous. Most of the zardozes I knew were fasting. They stayed at the karkhana all day and returned home only when they would be able to break their fast. Not so with the women. Only about half of the chikan kaarigars fasted. Many of the women had pre-existing health conditions, particularly diabetes, which made the fasting of all food and drink (including water) dangerous. Rehana's doctor convinced her not to fast. Shameen also has diabetes and did not fast. Shabana, however, soldiered through the first two weeks before the heat plus dehydration made her ill. She worked at the Center, returned home and did her chores, prepared *iftar* (meal to break the fast, or *roza*), and then continued with late night work and prayers in preparation for the next day of Ramzan.

In Lauren Berlant's piece about "slow death" she states that her piece "takes as its point of departure David Harvey's polemical observation, in *Spaces of Hope*, that under capitalism sickness is defined as the inability to work. This powerful observation about the rationalization of health is an important part of the story, but it is not the whole story either." I agree with David Harvey's observation of the equivalence between sickness and the inability to work in a capitalist society. I have shown that kaarigars such as Rehana make that identification themselves when they are ill. However, as Berlant implies, there is more to it. She points to the activity of reproducing life, a space of ordinariness, as leading to a slow death. Additionally, I point to the intensity of emotional work that can lead to illness. The opposite of this is also true: the other side of illness is the emotional work that can speed up the healing of illness.

Asif's illness

Asif, Rehana's *bhatija* (sister's son), was my first zardozi teacher. After three months spent exclusively on chikan and hearing a lot about how "worthless" zardozi was, I began

splitting my time between the two. It was important that I work within the network of kaarigars I was already enmeshed in near the College. All of the ladies at the Center had multiple male relatives who knew zardozi, and most of them had left the industry along with the wave of the unemployed zardozes. Many searched out new forms of employment. Some remained unemployed, such as Zakir, afraid to search out a new job without any experience or money to start a business. Others traveled to cities in India in search of still thriving, local zardozi markets. Rehana's older brother, Aarif left for Mumbai in December and remained unemployed for three months before he finally found work. Yasmeen's father lived in Hyderabad where he worked for a woman with a fancy boutique. The other option, if the funds were available, is to travel to "Saudi."[76] The extent of men's mobility compared to the women's as I outlined in the previous chapter, differs considerably. However, similar to the ladies, these major excursions to other cities and countries were for the purpose of waged labor to support the family. This was what Asif had to do in Saudi so soon after his wedding. I began learning from Asif in February 2019 after many conversations with Rehana about who I should learn from. At first, she recommended her brother, Zakir, but after some deliberation, she changed to Asif. Rehana said he was struggling more, so she spoke to him first. When we started, Zakir, one of Asif's ustaads, would constantly come down and question Asif about the order he was teaching the stitches in. They had good natured arguments. I think they rather enjoyed being able to talk about zardozi again after years of unemployment. It seemed they were flexing their muscles a bit, testing if the ustaad or *shaagird* (pupil) reigned as the better ustaad to me.

Muslim kaarigars have been traveling to the Gulf States for zardozi work for quite some time. In 2014, I spent time with a workshop of zardozi workers in Lucknow. The leader of the

[76] For the remainder of this chapter I will refer to Saudi Arabia as the kaarigars did, Saudi.

group stated that he did his training in Saudi with his elder brother who ran a workshop for a designer. As I met more zardozes I found that over half of them had at least traveled somewhere outside of the city of Lucknow if not been to Saudi or any of the other Gulf States. In the case of Rehana family, she and other heads of household loaned money to Aarif (an elder male cousin) to travel to Mumbai for zardozi work. This ensured his survival during the months it would take for him to find work. For Asif, who wanted to travel to Saudi, he already had the promise of work through other Lucknowi kaarigars living overseas. His family, including Rehana, provided money for him to get his passport, work visa, and airfare. Once in Saudi, Asif's first job was as a zardoz and then a delivery manager. Most of the men, him included, didn't travel with their wives in part because of the living situation abroad. He slept in a room with other migrant workers, so his wife stayed in Lucknow with his mother, brother, and sister-in-law. The savings he accumulated allowed them to move out of Khadra to a newly built house in a neighborhood with better infrastructure. The streets were cleaner, homes less cramped, and limited open sewage. His father and brother were no longer as reliant on their wages to support the family. This changed suddenly in November when he returned home.

One day, Rehana came to the Center and broke down in tears. She told us that her bhatija had been sick for some time abroad, and yet he continued to work through the discomfort. She described his pain as having seeped into his bones, making it impossible for him to continue with his work. His family convinced him to return to Lucknow. Rehana said it was common knowledge that the doctors over there are not good. He would be better off at home with his family who could care for his needs and have better doctors at his disposal. When he returned, he was nearly bed-ridden. Every bit of movement left him in pain. His skin had a sickly pallor, leaving him with a ghostly face, drained of energy. After weeks of blood tests, bone tests, skin

tests, and every other test possible, even those sent to Delhi, Rehana said they didn't know what was wrong with him.[77] Those were difficult days for her. She and Asif are close. During our zardozi lessons, Asif told me that they supported each other and talked to each other about things they couldn't tell anyone else. They lent each other money when the other needed it. He supported her emotionally when her husband abused her. He was sensitive to her needs as she was to his.

Asif's illness affected her greatly. I wrote in my field notes, "She looked much older and more tired. [She] was talking about how she had to leave at 1 but had to come in at least for a little while since she hadn't come in for a few days." In the first few days after his return to the city, she stayed away from the Center. She took the trip to his house and stayed there all day, helping her sister care for him. Eventually, she had to go back to work. She was, at that time, the only one earning in the house. Her husband was away driving, most likely in Nepal, and therefore unable to bring in money to sustain the family while she stayed with Asif. She took out loans to cover his medical care. The daily trips by vikram were expensive too. When she returned it was only for short periods, just in the mornings until lunch at 1pm. Rehana shifted to coming in for half days. She left the Center after lunch to then take the hour-long 40-rupee (round trip) Vikram ride to visit and take care of him.

When she came to the Center, Khala and the others exclaimed, "Go cry and pray that he will become cured! The more wishes you send the more they will come true. Whatever Allah does is good. What do we know!" They promised to add him to their daily prayers in the hope that their additional prayers might strengthen the request. Some would shed a few tears to let to

[77] Rehana eventually disclosed that he had some kind of cancer. The doctor had informed her and her brother who were present at an appointment, but the doctor supposedly told them not to tell Asif, lest they upset him. I was never able to confirm what his illness was. Just during the 6 months we worked together he ranged from being bed-ridden to riding about on his scooter as a delivery guy.

Rehana know that they are there to support her and that they felt the pareshaani with her. The illness of young, wage-earning men was a hard blow to any family. That it would happen to such a man as Aarif, a male relative who was young and strong and kind to Rehana, was especially heartbreaking. This emotional care labor exhibited by women in the neighborhood is commonly practiced and appreciated. For Rehana, it meant that someone like Khala is aware of this troubling time and that a request for a loan would not be out of place. Women frequently tapped into their emotional care networks, to exchange their emotional capital for funds to pay for medical bills. Men were expected to continue working to ensure that some amount of money continued to come in. Families also contributed to "BC" groups. These were pools of about 20 people who contributed the same amount of money each month (typically 100-200 rupees). Based on a rotation or the person who had the greatest need, that person would take the full amount each month. I heard women frequently talk about their BC groups. My assumption is that their families were aware of the BC group but that the women were responsible for maintaining their membership.

In my experience, the emotional well-being of the family was primarily the responsibility of women. They saw themselves as having the emotional bandwidth to take care of loved ones in a way that men could not. A frequent complaint at the Center was the lack of emotional depth in men. Why else would they do the horrible things they do? They must be without a heart. One stated, "Brothers have no feeling. There are many differences between brothers and sisters." Another said, "Men only deceive. If they aren't paying attention to us, then at least Allah is." The feeling was that men had no sense of empathy with women or their plight. Shabana described how her zardozi-producing brother (recently employed as a security guard at a mall) traveled to Saudi and brought back gifts only for their little brother, and nothing for his sisters.

Not all brothers were this way. Rehana has a close relationship with Zakir and Aarif. However, the general sentiment regarding men is that they are fundamentally different than women. They do not feel as women feel and when they do, it is generally towards members of their own gender. This explains the reliance on women's networks for support during such laborious times. They were charged with and willingly accepted their emotional care responsibilities.

Is the question then if women undertake emotional care labor because they view themselves as uniquely, but naturally, fit for the tasks? My experience indicates there is truth in this, but that would then imply that the emotional care work is in fact devoid of their "true" emotions. While it is, of course, impossible to know other's (let alone one's own!) true emotions, this was part of my purpose in spending time with these ladies in various spaces where they interacted with different people to different ends. There were certainly moments where they performed emotional labor, clearly alienating themselves from what their faces displayed, and their voices conveyed. Faces that cried without tears, flat voices that requested retribution from Allah for the pain of someone else. While I do not claim to know what acts of emotional care labor involved felt embodied emotions or those put on display, I argue it is important as an ethnographer to not be too distant from the emotions of my informants, and to rely on my sense of attunements.

My reading of emotion is also a swayed by my gender, the access it grants me, and the focus of this research. I am restricted by my own self-imposed limitations of setting out to address only the labor of women. This chapter holds the shortcoming of so many "gender studies" by looking only at women and spending limited time on men. If the men I encountered had problems related to emotions, as the ladies pointed out, I would say that it is not that they

feel nothing. It is rather that they feel everything and were bereft about how to progress. They too felt tenshan as the inability to resolve.

For most of my time in Lucknow, Zakir appeared to me as stuck in a world of tenshan. He and Rehana were able to share their deceased mother's home, meaning they wouldn't have to deal with being homeless. However, that was where the not-worrying ended. He hadn't worked in a few of years and had no way to move forward. "There is no cure for tenshan." He was a sad person. Didn't talk much. Mostly when he was with us, he was quiet. His face was often in a half-furrow, as if his worries were a habit. A month or so before my departure, Rehana used her connections to get a loan for him to start up a small store attached to the front of their house. These small stores were a common sight in the bending gulis where it was a pain to get all the way out to the main street to purchase small things. Two weeks before I left, I came to his inaugural opening. The lines from his furrows were still present, the residue of pain and distress. However, the rest of his face had changed. The resting expression on his face was not that of habitual worry. I am not telling this story to say that the only thing ex-zardozi workers need is employment to resolve their problems. Instead, I am pointing to the emotional care labor resulting in tenshan that male kaarigars in this same community must carry too, and the how that intertwines with the work women must do to ease it.

Conclusion

The point of my using the term 'knotted bodies' is to give my reader a visual representation of the labors that overlap and interrupt one another, crisscrossing within the bodies of female kaarigars. The pain and distress communicated through words such as *dard*, *pareshaani*, *majburi*, and *tenshan* provide us with a beginning to trace the constellations of pain throughout the body (inclusive of mind). While multiple factors are present in the production of

pain, I have chosen to address these by starting with the physical labor of chikan embroidery at the Center. Interruptions of additional labor located beyond the Center intrude in this work: animals, death, debt, children, weather, etc. I argue that to understand the work and pain involved in physical labor, the addition of emotional labor, care labor, and emotional care labor are vital to incorporate in one's analysis. Women partake in these various forms and must carry the emotional and physical burden of distress within themselves. To do this, to hold certain unresolvable stresses within themselves, is to hold these burdens in suspension, and this is, in fact, a form of emotional care labor in and of itself. Tenshan is the embodied sensation and accumulation of physical and mental pain and distress. There is a weight to these things, to the pain; and the problem with tenshan is that the weight must be held aloft, in suspension. In cannot be relinquished through resolution. Resolution means a letting down of the burden. You can work through tenshan, but the problem is when the attempt to hold it in suspension becomes too much, too heavy. How the ladies encountered and managed these emotional and physical burdens of themselves, their families, and communities is central to the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Hands and acknowledgement

This chapter begins with hands – what they are capable of telling us about the world around us as well as building a world around themselves. Hands may lead to the building up of intersubjectivity, and then testimonies (language) and witnessing, and touching and gesturing. These make for a foundation of sharing time with those relationships and reclaiming time from the production process to manage pain. What are the possibilities for relationships based around hands? Where might they lead? It is a complicated thing that the limbs that feel and cause pain may also, by our being oriented around them, be the way that the residue is managed and acknowledged. The residue isn't scraped off or lessened but is rather seen as present. It could be softened, perhaps, and its progress halted, through the relief brought by important moments like the exchange of testimonies, being a witness to pain, engaging in snack time, and listening to na'ts (praise and laudatory poetry recited in Urdu) on YouTube.

Hands are bodily instruments for intersubjective possibilities, and much of that involves joy and pleasure. In the case of this dissertation, much of this comes with the production of chikan. By this I mean that there is joy in producing chikan, in the act of stitching, of producing and designing, of learning new stitches, of quietly or loudly working with others, of seeing the result of one's hands be embroidery. The tangibility of creating a product brings joy. Hands, through the act of work, carve out space-time that may separate them, to a certain extent, from pain and distress unrelated to work (i.e., family, community, police, or political matters). The Center and Rehana's house, when not places of *tenshan* or drama (although that could be fun in its own way), were places where women could peacefully (*sakoon se*) stitch. The embodied act of embroidery was also cause for nostalgic rememberings of female loved ones who had taught them. One day, after Shahin's sister passed away, she brought a few old, embroidered

handkerchiefs her sister had made. The chikan was of the type not made for mass consumption. They were clearly made with time, a luxury the typical kaarigar did not have. While each part of this chapter engages with the work of hands in spaces through the lens of pain, it is due to the comfort women have with each other that make these difficult conversations possible, and even allow them to laugh during their telling.

Within each broader section of this chapter are subsections. The first section of the chapter investigates how intersubjective relationships develop through orientation (intentionality) towards hands and touch, and relatability through pain, leading to women giving testimonies of pain to fellow-kaarigar witnesses. The second section of the chapter engages with what I perceive to be a major component as to why testimonies are desired: the feeling of neglect and lack of care. I detail particular instances of how those relationships play out through the exchange between testimony-giver and witness, particularly in domestic spaces where many of these centers are located. The third, shorter section differs from the previous two in that it focuses on activities – snacking and YouTubing – employed to reclaim time from the production process to manage pain, distress, and sadness. These activities are also important moments of fun, or "*mazaa*" as Jonathan Shapiro Anjaria and Ulka Anjaria (among others)[78] have discussed. In the previous chapter I discussed various forms of bodily and emotional pain and distress caused by physical and emotional care labor, and the resulting tenshan. In this chapter, the connection between these two labors leads to intimate discussions of both amongst the ladies in

[78] Anjaria, Jonathan Shapiro and Ulka Anjaria. "Mazaa: Rethinking Fun, Pleasure and Play in South Asia," in *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies.* Vol. 43, No. 2 (2020), pp. 232-242.
Kirmani, Nida. "Can Fun Be Feminist? Gender, Space, and Mobility in Lyari, Karachi," in *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*. Vol. 43, No. 2 (2020), pp. 319-331.
Khubchandani, Kareem. "Dance Floor Divas: Fieldwork, Fabulating, and Fathoming in Queer Bangalore," in *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*. Vol. 43, No. 2 (2020), pp. 319-331.

the Center. The ability to relate to each other through physical labor and pain leads to further relatability through emotional distress and related issues.

Rehana's hand

After my own hands started to change as I spent more of my time embroidering. The changes were at first subtle but then the cracking and the pain started on the wounded middle finger. Rehana used the verb "*chilna*" to describe what was happening: "be peeled; be erased; be bruised; be scraped, be scratched out, be excoriated."[79] It certainly felt like my finger experienced all of these. Rehana pointed to the same phenomenon on her middle finger. There's something about the speed of stitching that causes these wounds to develop. Rehana's hands had those same embroidery-caused markings as well as various burns from working in the kitchen with an open and unstable flame and holding hot steel instruments and pots. For someone like Tahira who was forced to grind spices for dinner every day with a *seel batta* (stone slab and round-wedge to grind, similar function as a mortar and pestle) the callouses were on her palms and fingers. Their hands were accustomed to doing a variety of work and it showed.

Section 1: Hands, testimony, and witness

Hands pt. 1

> "I often see my hand moving but don't see the arm which connects it to my torso…Suppose I feel a pain which on the evidence of the pain alone, e.g., with closed eyes, I should call a pain in my left hand. Someone asks me to touch the painful spot with my right hand. I do so and looking round perceive that I am touching my neighbour's hand (meaning the hand connected to my neighbour's torso)." Wittgenstein, 1958, the *Blue and Brown Books, p.50.*

I accept the basic functionality of hands to reach out, to touch, and, therefore, to learn about what is beyond the lived body; but are there limits to what we can learn through our hands

[79] Salimuddin, S. M., 1st edition. *Oxford Urdu-English Dictionary*. (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2013), s.v. چھیلنا.

if the lived experience exists in the Other's lived body? What can hands do if they are limited within the bounds of their own lived body, and, we can assume, the lived experience of the Other is impenetrable by skin? Wittgenstein sees the limits of language as extending to the world that humans can imagine. That which we cannot imagine, which we cannot say, may exist. This inadequacy of language to communicate such unsayable experiences impacts the way we communicate our pain and suffering. I argue that Wittgenstein's relatability between "forms of life" (how we communicate with others) is possible through speech and through the body, specifically through hands, that we can feel pain in others' hands as well as in other places, and this ability is connected to the development of intersubjective relations between kaarigars. Veena Das' reading of Wittgenstein, as I discuss in 'hands part 2', is instrumental in making these connections possible. These are the first steps to give "testimony" to and request "witness" for one's pain, and then lead kaarigars to manage, process, and in some ways, obtain relief from pain and distress. In this section, I take a somewhat meandering dive into thoughts about hands, skin, and body parts. The scholars I discuss I selected primarily because their analogies about hands, skin,[80] and sensations of pain lend themselves to my attempts to explain the development of intersubjective relationships between women (myself included) as manifested in pain and its witnessing.

The hands are what interest me. The detachability of hands from the body makes it possible for an entire industry to capitalize upon their abilities; to fetishize the hands of the kaarigar and then sell that (as well as bits of blood and flesh sewn in) to the consumer, imploring

[80] There are numerous studies in the anthropological subfields of Sense Studies and Skin Studies. David Lowe identifies the earliest of such studies as the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition in 1898, specifically William MacDougall who was interested in cutaneous sensations. Current studies focus on the significance of culture in the creation of 'skinscapes' and 'skinships.' Lowe points to the 'cross-cultural' nature of skin and touch, making these social, not personal, occurrences and exchanges. He describes them "as interface instead of envelope." While this dissertation does not focus solely on touch, senses, and skin, I do bring some level of awareness to the significance of these elements to my experiences from Lucknow. More could be said if space allowed.

the latter to support 'women's work' by purchasing embroidery produced by 'delicate' 'feminine' hands. The nostalgia for crafting hands is strong in the textiles industry in India. Images focus away from the body of the kaarigar to the hands. This 'assembly' of the working kaarigar body is echoed in Melissa Wright's words about the "disposable third world woman's body", "like unattached limbs and free-floating heads, that are then discursively reassembled into the bodies that meet corporate specifications, outlined in engineering and managerial offices" (Wright 2006, 46). The kaarigar's body is similarly constructed for public consumption as the products too are sold. The detachability of limbs makes worker bodies disposable. Leslie Sharp has described this process of the commodification of parts through "body fragmentation", as "persons-through-bodies" (Sharp 2010). Piya Chatterjee's *A Time for Tea* is but one example of an ethnography that addresses this language focused on women's hands. Hands poised above a tea plant, leaf plucked. Hands poised above a circular frame, needle in hand. Body arched. "From these emerged the iconic image of dismemberment and allure" (Chatterjee, 28). By purchasing the items these hands make, the consumer can feel closer to the production process, while the kaarigars themselves remain alienated from the commodities they produce. The only thing remaining for them is the residue of pain, stuck to the body's appendages that bear the brunt of the labor. This residue was the subject of the previous chapter. It sticks to the body after labor. One example of such residue is the peeling, wounded middle finger.

The market perceives hands differently than how kaarigars do. They are gendered, fetishized, valued, and disposed of. Feminine, chikan-producing hands create *nazuk* (delicate) work that are seemingly detached from the heads, torsos, legs, and arms from the body of the kaarigar. Female kaarigar hands are quite different from male ones. Images of male zardozi hands, for example, also focus on the hands and little else, however the different needle, the *aari*

needle, which is held vertically, is a marked difference. The needle and the different way of holding it is often displayed prominently in marketing images. The hands are sold along with the garment. What are the processes that leads to this disconnect, that the same body in a market of limbs and cloth allows for the objectification and fetishization on one hand, and the foundation for subjective and intersubjective relations on the other?

Hands in the centers I frequented are the foundation for the possibility of intersubjective relationships. Hands do work. Hands provide a Heidegerrian "being-with" (*mitsein*) with the 'they' (Others) who one is with. "Being-with" is a "being-in-the-world" with Others who are with you (with their hands doing work) too. I experienced this 'being-with' as a female kaarigar amongst male zardozi workers and female chikan workers. "Being-with" kaarigars was as gendered experience that was possible across the gender spectrum. It is possible to 'be-with' all kaarigars. However, "being-with" with chikan kaarigars was less about being a miscellaneous kaarigar in Lucknow, and more about being a woman who does chikan in Khadra. Women come to Khala's Center (as well as others) be a part of and to do just that. Even women who do not themselves partake in the labor of embroidery (i.e., middlewomen) come by way of it, or as an excuse to socialize and be around others. This dissertation is in one sense, a phenomenological attention to hands, of the spaces they engender, the environs they invoke, and the possibility of relations based on their work.

The ladies were sensitive about their hands. They were central to their work at the Center and at home, but they were also the source of anxiety. Most Muslim women in Khadra covered their bodies with long-sleeved *kurtas*, *salwars*, dupatta over the head, often a niqaab which covered most of their faces when outside, and long gloves that reached up to their elbows. This last garment was common amongst all women in the city. I typically saw women driving their

own scooties around town with these gloves on. They were an additional expense the ladies chose not to incur. Besides, the long-sleeved kurta and niqab did the same thing. There are a number of reasons for such extensive covering which I will not go into here. One reason, however, was to maintain the fairness of their skin. In the first chapter, I briefly discussed the significance of race and color to Shabana in our interactions. Her fear of turning 'black'. Her fear focused on the color of her face and her hands. This fear increased when we sat on the *chhat* (roof) during the winter. My hands and skin were commented on as such a nice color. Why would I want to sit in the sun where they would get darker? I offered to take sunny spots because the ladies were so concerned about what their hands would look like after hours of working up there. Anxiety around the hands was also one that their hands would convey dirt to the super-white cloth. Middlemen and middlewomen also instilled this fear when distributing cloth. Women were forbidden from eating while embroidering. They could not handle anything for fear of transferring it to the cloth. For Shabana, she saw my white hands as more capable of keeping the cloth white than her black hands could.[81] Scholars such as Piya Chatterjee, Anne McClintock, Lucinda Ramberg, Caitrin Lynch, and others who have written about the women's labor in multinational clothing factories have addressed various issues related to color, race, dirt, and hands. I hope to contribute my own approach to hands and labor to this list.

Hands are central to the spaces I was in, although this was not always apparent. Hands got me in the room. They were the device that, as Duranti's reading of Husserl would claim, made the possibility of potentially initiating an intersubjective relationship. And yet, it wasn't just hands, but the temporal connection between hands and work. It is the 'have you put in the time' aspect of hand work. As I was told by Rehana, many outsiders had come through the

[81] Much more should be said about the role of colonialism in the racism and colorism of skin, particularly regarding my interactions with hands, if space and time allowed.

Center to learn. Most often, they learned only a few stitches and left happy. There were a couple who had done time, but even then, it was hard to get Khala to teach them beyond the introductory stitches. That would have been the case with me if Rehana, Beenish, and even Khala's sisters had not been willing to show and help me when I asked them. One willingly showed me a difficult type of jaali only because, so she claimed, I had the 'interest' (*dilchaspi*) and 'passion' (*shauq*).[82] To show your willingness to give time to the work, you have entered a temporal framework. It's not that working the traditional workday of 9am to 5pm wasn't important. That also helped. However, there were more subtle signs that you kept odd hours to work. I went home with homework and returned having practiced for many hours after dinner. It was only with practice, they assured me, that I would get better – committing to that lack of temporal structure to work with one's hands.

I am interested in how hands are used to understand the relation between subjects, between subjects and objects, between a female gendered Self and Other. For Wittgenstein, quoted above from the *Blue and Brown Books*, it is their seemingly disembodied existence that makes it possible to imagine pain in one's hand manifesting in another's hand. They are visible to us as both a part of and distinct from the self. For Husserl, the act of intentionality, the directness of action, and the giving and taking of 'sensefulness' is closely tied to intersubjectivity. Returning briefly to Sara Ahmed's discussion of the "orientation device" in the first chapter, hands are that device in this context. The hands "shape the contours of space" by creating possibilities for it. I am not implying that every moment in the Center was directed to hands in a conscious or subconscious way, but rather that work with hands opened up the space in particular ways. Katherine Stewart's "attunements" as an ethnographic practice comes to

[82] Wilkinson-Weber discusses the importance of shauq as a second reason to do this work, with the first being majburi.

mind. Hands are tools for attunements as well as a device to attune towards. Certain rooms in the Center or in other homes are prepped for work with hands, therefore places may be oriented in a way to encourage handwork or to make it easier to perform. One example of this would be the rug pulled out at the beginning of each workday to capture stray bits of thread and to shield the women's bodies from the cold concrete floor.

Husserl argues through 'intentionality' that objects, as subjects encounter them, have their own objective reality separate from the sensations attached to those objects. This is the foundation for all subjects' experience, even if different senses are attached, leading to a basis for empathy. From there, everything we interact with is tied to 'horizons' of activity – the sense we give to objects and the sense we take from them, and that those senses will contribute to the experience other subjects have after we interact with them. These senses extend beyond the body to create 'horizons.' These senses in turn make up our 'life-world.' Kaarigars' hands at work expand into horizons, with individual senses sticking to others' hands. Individual stitches or fabrics may also have their own horizons, with each embroiderer viewing those items in a way that reflects their experience of working with them. One example is the ease of working with georgette fabric[83]. Although almost too slippery (at least for me it was) to work with, its loose warp and weft meant that kaarigars did not have to struggle to pull the needle through. It was easier and, most importantly, quicker on the fingers.

Husserl discusses the 'lived-body' as having the capability of being both subject and object, the site of a "unity of senseings" (Husserl, 402). One is able to both inflict as well as experience pain, creating a distancing between the subject and object, both of which Husserl sees as existing in the body. I find it meaningful that the hands are chosen as the body part that, for a

[83] A dull, lightweight crepe fabric, previously made from silk, now often mixed with synthetics.

kaarigar, can do damage to various parts of the body through stitching, as well as to receive damage. For Husserl, it is through the touching of one hand with the other that we may learn more about the Self. To begin this sense exchange, Husserl starts with the feelings apprehended by and within the Self. Hands are central to this: "In the case of one hand touching the other…we have then two sensations, each is apprehendable or experienceable in a double way" (Husserl, 147). Husserl's words are about "Double Sensation", *Doppelempfindung*, in *Ideas II.* Much has been written about this particular analogy, with fellow phenomenologists with strong views on the usefulness of it, Sartre's in particular who does not agree with Husserl about "double sensation." For Sartre, we may observe our hands only as if they were an outside object, as the 'body-for-the-other' (Moran 2010). To know one's body, Sartre states, "The caress reveals the Other's flesh as flesh to myself and to the Other…It is my body as flesh which causes the Other's flesh to be born" (Moran, 135). For Sartre, "double sensation" is merely an epistemological fact and not something contributing Self-knowledge.

To briefly bring together Wittgenstein and Husserl, their approaches to hands are different, one literary and the other phenomenological. Husserl's approach to the embodied experience is that everything there is, is there. For phenomenologist Merleau-Ponty, this does not take into account the unseen experiences and histories that are not apparent when interacting with an object. For Wittgenstein, while he approaches language as representing only what we can imagine there to be, he does not take this to mean that everything there is, is already represented by language.

By acknowledging that flesh, as it exists on my body, also wraps around and encases the Other's body, what follows is an opening for empathy; however, the flesh and hands of Husserl and Sartre are unmarked and detached from the 'lived body' as de Beauvoir imagined it, an

opening into the embodied experience of woman. The body theorized for Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, and Wittgenstein is unmarked. It is without gender, race, or caste. As I discussed in the first chapter of this dissertation, in the case of environ, the body doesn't not exist without such external and internal markings that alter the way it operates in and moves through space. Simone de Beauvoir, Sara Ahmed, Nirmal Puwar, Donna Haraway, Veena Das, and Melissa Wright, to name a few, point to the significance of the *lived body*, and the Othering of women in certain spaces. How does one woman's hand touch another? To take Sartre's claim that to know the Other is to caress the Other's flesh takes on new meaning when that flesh may be the disembodied parts of women as Wright discusses in her work about female laborers in Mexico (2006). If one hand touches another, does the hand search for certain bumps and callouses on the other to claim the other as its own?

A counter to the capitalist and patriarchal ability to alienate parts from bodies and gender from experience would be to consider, instead, Donna Haraway's question: "Why should our bodies end at the skin, or include at best other beings encapsulated by skin?" The skin of female kaarigars have may be shared with the skin of another, a sense of "being-with." Skinscapes may be extended to create an intersubjective relation. The wounded middle finger connects my hand to Rehana's and Beenish's – skin with skin, residue with residue. This stitching together of Self and Other's skin is a response to Haraways's query. I do not see knowledge of one's hands (and oneself) and the Other's flesh (per Sartre's claim) as unrelated or unremarkable phenomena, especially in light of how kaarigars stitch together. What would touching the Other do if one does not explore the realm of possibilities through one hand touching the other. It is the ability to bring those things together that enable the eventual sharing of testimonies. A mnemonic practice for writing this dissertation was to recall myself in the Center, hooked in to the *lehenga* we are

all embroidering on. The fabric seemed almost like an extension of our skin, connecting us to each other and making movement difficult. It was our hands that allowed this to happen.

It is important to revisit the tension that comes with pinning so much on the 'orientation device' of one's hands. I see it as at the very least a complication that one may be oriented to or hyper-aware of one's (and others') hands both as the source of labor as well as a something to connect through. Hands open up relationships between kaarigars which then allow them to seek acknowledgement from those they work with, for the neglect/abandonment that they experience at the hands of kin and community. Being oriented to something like hands because of the labor they do, does not mean that the relations with one's hands must end with labor. What I mean by that is that orientation devices do not imply the type or purpose or 'end note' of that device. Devices are flexible – we can shape what the device means to us and what purpose or value it will have, or tool it will become to me. Hands may be central to the production process, but they may also be its very undoing. By our very orientation to hands, they may tell us about the harm they are capable of. We may readjust what we see hands or orientation devices to be, especially if they are devices that we did not necessarily choose to orient ourselves towards. Hands orient to the causes of pain as well as to those who may assist in pain's easing.

Wittgenstein's analogy of hands is a poetic way to think about a few issues central to the ladies' ability to process, communicate by seeking acknowledgement, and manage their pain. This concept of pain as related to the acknowledgement of it is something Das writes about as she states, "we begin to think of pain as acknowledgement and recognition; denial of the other's pain is not about the failings of the intellect but the failings of the spirit" (Das 2006, 57). As I write, I question – the nature of the pain we experience; pain's potential to exist in another subject or place (external vs. internal); the inadequacy of our linguistic attempts to entirely

describe pain (it is shifty, rhetorically and spatially); and the frequent reliance on others to describe and understand it (to view pain as an intersubjective moment). The next section continues this discussion of hands, and their role in opening up the space for the management and acknowledgement of pain through testimonies and witnesses.

Hands pt. 2

In 'Hands pt. 1', I discussed the potential orientation around and intentionality towards hands as a way to understand how intersubjective relationships between kaarigars (and even eventually, me) develop. In this 'Hands pt. 2', I address how those intersubjective relationships are meaningful to the management of pain through a spoken explication, or 'testimony', of pain, and acknowledgement of pain by a 'witness'. I revisit the concept of emotional care labor in this chapter, arguing that the act of witnessing is an example of that labor. To be a witness is to compensate for neglect and a lack of care. Wittgenstein's and others' play of touch between self and other in attempts to describe pain and Das' interpretation of it lay the groundwork for much of my analysis. I place importance on language and speech for it is in part through the women's words to each other and in part through their gestures and touches that they communicate pain through testimony.

Ethnographers have documented and investigated multiple ways in which women employ language to communicate their pain. Often that speech is distorted, knotted, mixed, and symbolic to reflect the world-breaking nature of their experiences (much in line with Wittgenstein and Das' understanding of language's role in society). These four scholars engaged with the range of linguistic attempts to communicate and manage, seek acknowledgement and witnesses to pain: Veena Das (1997, 1998, and 2006), Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1992), Sarah Pinto (2014), and Aiwha Ong (2010). In the case of enduring endemic infant death, Scheper-Hughes engaged with

the language Brazilian mothers in use after death, of referring to dead infants as angels. Pinto recorded the linguistic acrobatics that female patients in asylums used to communicate their suffering at the hands of a patriarchal culture and family in India. Ong describes repeated instances of spirit possessions of Malay female factory laborers. I interpret each of these scholars as the recounting of testimonies that were unspeakable and world-breaking.

At the Center, I came to think of bodily pain from chikan as a more casual form of pain. It didn't seem to convey the inner turmoil, the distress, and the tenshan, that made productivity difficult. As I argued in the previous chapter, the ladies showed a preference for one pain over the other. Das states in reference to this: "From a Wittgensteinian perspective, these seem to be only possibilities of recovery through a descent into the ordinariness of everyday life, of domesticity, through which alone the words that have been exiled may be brought back. This everydayness is then in the nature of a return – one that has been recovered in the face of madness" (Das 1998, 183). I don't say this to belittle what kaarigars experience, but to suggest the regularity of the bodily aches, and the strange, expected comfort that comes with experiencing them in the body. These are the steps to a "slow death" (Berlant). They are the "normal" or "everyday" "sufferings" (Das 1998). The way the ladies discussed their bodily pain was almost pedestrian. A common scene went something like this:

An impromptu round robin of aches and pains. It began with someone touching and massaging an aggrieved part of their body, declaring and describing it in a sentence or two, and then silently passing the 'speaking baton' to whoever spoke next. The categorical word was dard. Tiredness, or *thakaan*, was another, especially for the muscles, neck, shoulders, and eyes. The round robin went seamlessly, with each person speaking for a few moments. Sometimes one of the ladies was not in the mood to listen to someone else's pain and cut in to offer up their pain

into words. Two such instances I mentioned in the previous chapter. Both occurred between Tahira and Rehana. In one, following Rehana's comment about eye strain, Tahira rebuked her for working at night, something all of them had to do regularly. (Round robins did not necessitate solutions to pain. Just a good listen.) In the second, the situation was slightly different. I asked Beenish why Rehana did not come in that day. Her response was that she had many pareshaani and was feeling a lot of tenshan. Not a cryptic response but not very detailed either. Rehana's inclination was to share less in the public forum of the Center, especially if her distress is related to tenshan – the emotional care laborious bits. They were emotionally costly to put into words, and perhaps, for her, the reward of empathy was not worth the exchange. She tended to share more in smaller groups or with one other person present. Beenish was similar in her reticence to share her troubles with the group, preferring to present herself as an upbeat, positive person. It was well within her character to signal to the nature of Rehana's troubles without divulging them in their entirety. Tahira found this frustrating, saying under her breath, "What are household problems? Why would you ask if they won't tell you?"

Why is it costly to put pain into words? Because to do so means to experience it again, to revisit it, to acknowledge that it is there. To iterate one's suffering and trauma is to put "fragments" together. Das argues that to put it into words, in the Wittgensteinian sense, is to acknowledge that this pain and trauma is in the world, and that could be world breaking. These things, to make these sayable, means to let them into your language and to, therefore, acknowledge that they have a place in the world. What does it mean to then make a testimony of those words, of that experience? How to make it so that it does not break the world? "Fragments allude to a particular way of inhabiting the world, say, in a gesture of mourning…What is it to pick up the pieces and to live in this very place of devastation?" (Das 2006, 5).

Much has been written about the role of the witness and their testimony – typically a survivor of violence, pain, trauma. What does the witness see and how do they present the "truth" that is untellable, in the fullest sense? Agamben's *Remnants of Auschwitz* reiterate the testimonies of witnesses who write about the struggle to convey all that they have seen through writing and mere words. In the opening preface to his book he states, "the survivors bore witness to something it is impossible to bear witness to" (13). The witness gives testimony to what they have seen and experienced. This is how the witness has been theorized. My interest is in two figures: the testimony-giver who is the one who experiences pain and survives it, and second, the individual who I also consider a witness, who gives acknowledgement of the testimony by listening. This second person is no survivor to the pain depicted in the testimony, is in a position external from the immediate action, and yet, is entrusted through the bonds of intersubjective empathy There is a second Latin definition for witness as outlined by Agamben: *supertes*. It is someone, a third party, who has witnessed "from beginning to end and can therefore bear witness to it" (17). I submit a third definition, a witness who is merely there to listen to the testimony. The testimony-giver having survived their own trauma may then demand a witness to acknowledge at happened to them. Foucault's witness is one who has seen and experienced disciplinary power. To give a testimony of pain by one, and to listen and bear witness by another, is an exchange, a relationship.

There is a temporal element of giving testimony which relates to the way women communicate their pain: to speak about it as it happens vs. after it happens. There is also the positional element of the witness: to hear about pain from the person who experienced it, vs. being present for the pain as it happens. In each instance, the one experiencing pain would give testimony to their experience as a way to cement its occurrence and to seek acknowledgement of

it. What interests me in this process is the use of the intersubjective relation between these two figures, the one who experiences and gives testimony, and the other who is called upon to listen and acknowledge the testimony. It is someone who has similarly seen and experienced the world breaking. The kaarigar witness I describe is one who has experienced similar trauma first-hand, and it is that trauma which makes them an appropriate witness for the testimony of an intersubjective familiar. The testimony contains bits of the unspeakable. Having a witness who does not need those bits explained makes the exchange worthwhile. These are a few words I encountered that are associated with 'testimony': 'solemnity', 'witness', 'truth', 'evidence', 'information', 'exists', 'see or know.' Most of these are impersonal and describe what we are meant to get from a testimony, but the definitions of 'exists' and 'see or know' speak to the experience of the testimony-giver. I would add to this, that to describe one's pain through another body, to be a witness, the other body may need to be a specific body, one in which an intersubjective relation is a possibility or is present in; in this case, the location of the Center and labor of chikan with hands. Women did not tell testimonies of their own pain by pointing to another's body; however, the possibility that others in the room experience similar pain is important.

Desiring a witness to acknowledge their pain comes from the silencing, non-acknowledgement, and neglect or lack of care regarding the source of the pain. There are many reasons for the silencing. Society or a specific community may deem the pain is "normal", "everyday", unacknowledged, unaccounted for (i.e., non-existent), misunderstood (meaning, beyond the embodied experience of others). I have discussed the emotional care labor required to withhold one's own pain and distress, as well of other's, within themselves, in suspension, which leads to tenshan. How to manage that? The ability to give testimony to one's pain to an

empathetic witness is an act of managing. The testimony is an example of Wittgenstein's "speech act" – words that do something as much as communicate something.

Das says that the statement 'I am in pain' is the beginning of a "language game," and that this is a conduit to move beyond suffering as something private. I argue it is also predicated upon a Husserlian move toward intersubjectivity. But it is, as Durant points out, not an end, but a beginning of a possibility of empathy. It is, I argue, predicated upon the place of the Center, the shared work of the hands, and the presence of gendered bodies (forms of life). Wittgenstein also saw the significance of gesture, of phenomena, as clarifying the grammar problems of pain. It is this problem with language that I see as leading to the importance of the intersubjective relation in communicating and, therefore, managing one's pain.

This chapter is also about the process of giving pain "a home in language" (Das 1997 and 2006) in the body. Pain and distress become a part of embodied experience through the act of putting into words. To begin with the language, I return to Wittgenstein's words from 'hands pt. 1':

> "I often see my hand moving but don't see the arm which connects it to my torso…Suppose I feel a pain which on the evidence of the pain alone, e.g., with closed eyes, I should call a pain in my left hand. Someone asks me to touch the painful spot with my right hand. I do so and looking round perceive that I am touching my neighbour's hand (meaning the hand connected to my neighbour's torso)." Wittgenstein, the *Blue and Brown Books*, p. 49.

Wittgenstein's scene here seems to be both a metaphysical inspection and criticism of grammar; what is language/grammar and what are its limitations. Important to note is that language is unable to grasp the 'where' due to the elusive quality of pain. Following in Veena Das' wake, I see Wittgenstein as pointing beyond a criticism of the grammar of pain, and to the Other's request for acknowledgement. Das reads Wittgenstein alongside the gendered violence

perpetrated against women during Partition, and sees linguistic possibilities leading from violence through acknowledgement to empathy. She states, “In the genre of lamentation, women have control both through their bodies and through their language – grief is articulated through the body, for instance, by infliction of grievous hurt on oneself, "objectifying" and making present the inner state, and is finally given a home in language” (Das 1997, 68-69). The hope is that by settling “a home in language,” there be “the possibility that my pain could reside in your body” (Ibid, 70). She describes Wittgenstein’s argument as “language as the bodying forth of words” (Ibid). It puts what is in our lifeworlds into linguistic existence. Wittgenstein argues that our worlds are created by the language we use, and what we cannot think through our language cannot exist in our world. This does not mean that things beyond language do not exist, but rather that we cannot imagine them.

It’s interesting to consider something that we cannot experience, i.e. someone else’s pain, as possible or rather only possible if we imagine it to be. It is something that seems to be completely divorced of our embodied experience and yet something that has the potential for creating empathy. How is it possible for the pain in my body to be experienced by another? This is where I found intersubjectivity, particularly for kaarigars who have an orientation towards hands, to be fruitful. Wittgenstein argues that relatability within given “forms of life” is possible through language.[84] Das extends this to the potentiality to communicate pain through mourning, lamentation, and storytelling. These speech forms are “how my pain may reside in another body” (Das 2006, 69). They are instrumental in the acceptance that violence has been done to the body.

However, to be at a state of relatability with others does not mean that everything there is to be known about their experiences is already known. To return briefly to ‘intentionality’,

[84] Wittgenstein draws from Agamben for his concept of the ‘forms of life.’ The latter defines ‘form of life’ opposite to an ‘abstract naked life.’ The ‘abstract naked life’ is that which does not have the protection of sovereignty.

Wittgenstein points to the relationship between our approach to objects or experiences and the language used to describe it. The language is an approximation; or rather, it is its shadow. Gargani's reading of Wittgenstein's sense of intentionality in language speaks to this: "it isn't the similarity between the experiences which is responsible for our use of words but, on the contrary, it is our use of words which establishes what is to be called similar or identical. "As similarity does not explain the shadow, it does not explain the relation to fact either"" (Gargani 1995, 132). The final statement in quotations is from Wittgenstein's *Blue and Brown Books*. The experience and the language are mere approximations; however, one cannot replicate the other. I often thought about the word tenshan while in the field and the range of experiences it was used to explain. All of these were brought together under the umbrella of tenshan, rather than the word itself that 'establishes what is to be called similar or identical.' This is not to say that the sensation of tenshan was not present, but the actual sensation of tenshan did not seem to be what was necessarily being described. It could be this very grammar problem, the seeming similarity between experiences connected through a linguistic gap, which may encourage relatability. Because of the inability to do more than approximate, the desire to relate may close that gap. For Das, language is "the context in which we could see how we are to trace words back to their original homes when we do not know our way about" (Das 1998, 179-80). Language provides additional information that may not be apparent to the person we communicate to. While language is a signal to relatability, its purpose is also to divulge more.

Veena Das speaks about the knowledge women hold by being witness to other's pain. I quote her somewhat at length here. Connecting witness to knowledge connects it to one of the definitions of the former, 'truth.' She uses the term to describe those women who encountered

and saw violence they may not have been a part of. The first sentence I quoted in 'Hands pt.1' and I revisit it again here:

> [W]e begin to think of pain as acknowledgement and recognition; denial of the other's pain is not about the failings of the intellect but the failings of the spirit…Even when it appears that some women were relatively lucky because they escaped direct bodily harm, the bodily memory of being-with-others makes that past encircle the present as atmosphere. This is what I mean by the importance of finding ways to speak about the experience of witnessing: that if one's way of being-with-others was brutally damaged, then the past enters the present not necessarily as traumatic memory but as poisonous knowledge. This knowledge can be engaged only through a knowing by suffering (Das 2006, 76).

Das' description of being-with-others (*mitsein*) as a bodily memory has the power to resurface in a way that recreates the atmosphere of its happening. There are two interpretations of what it means to 'be-with-others' that are important to think about in exchanges of painful testimonies. The first is to think of a subject who witnesses violence/pain that may not have necessarily happened to them. But their ability to relate to the suffering from such an experience is there. The second interpretation is from the subject's point-of-view. If their previous ability to be-with-others was damaged in some way, perhaps due to the violence they experienced, then it is difficult to mend that and then be-with-others who may acknowledge their suffering. It could be this 'poisonous knowledge' of what it previously may have been like to be-with-others that keeps the subject from putting their pain into language. Both of these point to the significance of the 'other' to know about and therefore acknowledge suffering. This is where the shared emotional burden of pain and distress is important to management of the social body. The witness in these scenarios is able to be-with the subject of violence due to the former's own sense of suffering.

Relatability, intersubjectivity, empathy, acknowledgement – these are forms of management of pain that brings bodies, gestures, and language together. It is the valuation of pain as something that exists, and as something that has a right to exist and speaks of the importance or worth of their labor. For them to see and hear each other softens or diminishes pain. By spreading the burden of pain amongst multiple bodies, each body is able to carry less of it. Is it about knowing that your pain is not singular? That requires a deeper inquiry into the nature of pain than I have the space for in this chapter. However, I leave the question open as something that requires a better answer than I provide here.

Steven Cavell argues that Wittgenstein's play between bodies highlights the creation or work of imagination that goes into conceiving of connectedness, separation, and location. I quote Cavell somewhat at length here:

> I take Wittgenstein's fantasy in that passage as a working out of Descartes's sense that my soul and my body, while necessarily distinct, are not merely contingently connected. I am necessarily the owner of my pain, yet the fact that it is always located in my body is not necessary. This is what Wittgenstein wishes to show - that it is conceivable that I locate it in another's body. That this does not in fact, or literally, happen in our lives means that the fact of our separateness is something that I have to conceive, a task of imagination - that to know your pain I cannot locate it as I locate mine, but I must let it happen to me (Das 2006, 41).

I would like to extract the word 'contingently' and suggest that pain and its owner are contingently connected. Cavell appears to be pointing to this by stating that pain does not need to be located within a particular body, even if it is owned by another. This contingency may provide enough space for another to relocate that pain, to make it shared amongst many. This last statement, to know and to locate is to let happen, highlights this as a physical as well as bodily spatial issue. However, the situation of the round robin and the orientation around hands is a pathway to, in a way, have your pain 'happen to me.' Pain in Cavell's statement has an almost

autonomous quality, that it may occur in different bodies. It is perhaps only through a sense of empathy that makes this 'fantasy' possible.

Intersubjectivity allows us to see our experiences as possible in other bodies. This is a common argument for phenomenologists. There are simple ways of establishing and documenting that relationship and I have one brief anecdote from my time with zardozi workers that exhibits this:

Back at Kadhai Ghar, I was in my first days of working with the zardozi workers. It was April and miserably hot. The doors were closed to keep out the hot wind (*lo*) and sun (*roshni*). The fans were spinning full blast, and the large straw-wrapped cooler was sending out cool air through a massive fan and specks of water. The kaarigars were taking a break and chatting while I continued stitching at the adda. We were still awkward around each other, in part because it was uncommon for even female zardozi workers to work with men, let alone an outsider to the industry (and country). They were a bit confused about my purpose in being there and learning with them. On a different day, one of the guys joked about how all of the kaarigars are leaving zardozi, and here I am, coming to it.

One of the younger guys plucked up some courage and spoke to me from across the room: "Mam, won't you have some watermelon and chai with us?" Watermelon is a delectable, cold food. Also, everyone knew I never passed up a chai or snack offer. I leapt up from the adda and nearly sashayed across the room for my snacks. I stood silently with them slurping and overheard one of them say from a few feet away: "*Ab mam asli kaarigar hai*." Now m'am is a real kaarigar. Certainly, I am not implying that my ability to inhale snacks at break time allowed immediate association with kaarigars in all aspects. But these small comments hinted at other spoken and unspoken acts within kaarigar "forms of life." I typically took my tea with the

director and teachers. They would chat about upcoming lessons and I took advantage of their stash of delicious *gudh*, by snacking on the sugary, molassy mass. But, after the watermelon, I was invited to all chai breaks upstairs in the kitchen with them from then on. I didn't participate in the conversation much, nor did they ask me to, but as a kaarigar to them, my presence for chai was a given, or at least possible. This is what I mean when I say that speech (language) is only part of what makes up an intersubjective relational space. Certain acts such as snacking were invitations to make those relations possible, or to signal to the existence of those relations.[85] These were group interactions. Chai was an opportunity to further develop relations with those around you, even if it was only through sipping and eating.

If hands have the potential for altering relations and space, they may also have the power to influence what we demand or expect of relations and space. By this I mean that hands are involved in setting the terms of relationships with others and with space. To work with hands and be in certain spaces, kaarigars have expectations of each other. This could be interpreted through a feminist ethics lens that emphasizes the importance of one's responsibility to a community. Carol Gilligan's 'ethics of care' is most often cited in this approach. She discusses ethics of care as morality of responsibility. I don't see an ethics of care in the Center in the sense that their actions were based in a felt responsibility for the care of each other, or that they needed to behave in a certain way because they were responsible for each other's wellness. Does that mean that they only behaved in the way they did for selfish reasons? It was not that either. Instead, I saw emotional care labor. What is the difference between having expectations or hopes of an

[85] I experienced a similar indication of kaarigar-being in the Center. When the women used the term 'kaarigar', it was meant to be a statement about wisdom or experience. This took the form of being able to play with the stitches available to use and follow one's own aesthetic terms in their placement. For example, it was typically Rehana who 'set' the stitches to be employed on a particular garment. One day Khala came into the room and asked Shabana if she wanted to be the one to set the next garment. Shabana turned to Rehana and somewhat jokingly said, "She's the real kaarigar and should set the piece." This was something particular to chikan that I did not experience in any other craft work setting I had been in.

exchange,[86] versus taking part in an exchange of emotional or social capital in the Bourdieuian sense? Is it cynical if we view our interactions with others only through the lens of exchange of social capital? There are a variety of reasons we undertake emotional work: a sense of ethics and responsibility (Gilligan); as a form of social capital (Bourdieu); emotional labor as wage labor (Hochschild); emotional care labor to the extend the life of our family and friends. Ultimately, it is impossible for me to say why each of the women I spent time with did any emotional work. Even if there is the expectation of an exchange of emotions, does that make the emotions any less significant, lived (embodied), or not worthy of engagement? Emotions and displays of emotions point to what we expect from relationships. Marx found human's ability to *feel* their suffering to be of the utmost importance in eventually bringing about a revolutionary overthrow of capitalism (Scott 2020). This expected exchange, the desire to have one's pain reside in another's body, in part may explain Tahira's annoyance with Rehana when the latter only reluctantly shared her troubles.

There are limits to language. Das sees certain types of violence as existing beyond the bounds of language – that violence has the capacity to be world-breaking. To her this "grammar problem of pain" has the potential for "crying out" and "answer[ing] to that call" for acknowledgement (Das 1997, 70). The grammar problem is the inaccuracy and lack of specificity with our language. Without the language to describe violence or pain, particularly during Partition, how is it possible to speak of violence, to make it a part of one's (and society's) world, and to experience a moment of "acknowledgement, which may be given or denied?" (Das 1997, 70). And yet, there are plenty of instances of denial to speak.

[86] Saiba Varma describes what I envision this exchange to be through the term 'hospitality' in Kashmir.

I turn briefly to instances of rejection when individual women chose not to participate. I return to an interaction I discussed in the previous chapter when Beenish attempts to extract information from Rehana about the source of her distress. What is it to attempt that kind of extraction of language? If the subject puts their pain into language, it is to admit to a desire for acknowledgement. As much as I witnessed testimony, I also saw resistance to giving it. Kamala Visweswaran's chapter about the refusal to be an informant (on one's own pain?) is one example of such resistance. As I sat in the Center, there were days when someone was visibly upset but unwilling and unable to make it public through language. The resistance was perhaps to maintain control over a sensation, given that the cause of distress is usually beyond one's control. This created tension. Beenish too resisted extraction. One day, she worked silently. I asked her if something happened. She mustered a faint smile and said, nothing. After she left for her tuitions, Shabana said when she arrived in the morning, she found Beenish crying quietly to herself. She didn't know what had happened, only that it was in some way related to work.

I saw the ladies use such moments of weakness against each other. To give testimony is to give up something to the group. One day at Rehana's house, she and I were talking about Shabana and how frequently she would use your weaknesses against you if she was unhappy about a failed exchange or lack of willingness to engage. Rehana said that she tended to keep to herself more at the Center because she never knows what Shabana will say behind her back, or if she will later use Rehana's own words against her. The centers were not open, uncomplicated, spaces of trust. For example, Raziya has a problem with not paying her workers on time. She also never gave advances; something the ladies needed often. While Khala was less friendly and paid less than Raziya, she always gave loans and advances if the ladies pleaded their case. Rehana frequently took out advances while Asif was ill. These rejections to open entirely to the

community of kaarigars should not be ignored, however they should not be viewed in contradiction to any other relation in their lives. The relationships they built served multiple purposes, such as the management of pain.

The "horizons" for our hands lead to promising beginnings about how to think about pain and intersubjective relations amongst kaarigars. They extend beyond experiences of work at embroidery frames. Relationships developed through embroidery do not stop there. Touching hands and limbs found reattached to others' bodies is, as Cavell states, an exercise in imagination. Haraway's call for us to consider our bodies as extending beyond our skin speaks to a need to rethink and reconfigure how our individual bodies are stitched together. To imagine pain in another is an exercise in empathy made possible through language and gesture. Seeing parts of the lifeworlds of kaarigars, I was able to glimpse these exchanges in testimonies, and to add some of my own modest testimonies about the residual pain from work. I turn now to the spaces that hands engender and prepare for testimonies in centers and homes.

Intersubjective geography at (center) homes

The spatial aspect of intersubjectivity and testimony-giving is not simply a sense of shared experience through lived geography, but also the dimensions of place that encourage sensefulness. Sensefulness is the presence in each object of the giving and taking of senses which come from prior subject interactions with that object. Here I am referring to places like Khala's and Raziya's centers, or NGOs with workspaces for kaarigars, or kaarkhaanas. These places provide a foundation for intersubjectivity. What is unique, however, between a more officious space of an NGO or shop front and the centers in Khadra, is the domestic nature of the latter. Homes are easily transformed into spaces of work, play, sociality, and piety, to name a few. Tahira responded to a question I had about why she had permission to work in the center while

travel to other places remained difficult. “It’s a home/house after all.” On a different occasion I went into the kitchen to place a few dirty dishes and she stated, “I don't like going into Khala's kitchen. At home I do what I want, but it's always different like that with your own home." The home-ness of the Center had its limitations.

Domestic spaces have been the subject of studies in multiple cultural contexts across the disciplines.[87] Some of that literature I have discussed in the introduction to this dissertation. Some of those have addressed explicitly the role of women in the home in the production of items in cottage industries as part of a “reserve army of labor,”[88] to be used as and when they are needed.[89] My purpose here is not to duplicate those findings but rather to incorporate some of my own embodied experience from working and being in domestic and other spaces while embroidering and socializing. I am interested in a geographic lens of the architectural space of homes, and the impact homes have on creating spaces of intersubjective possibilities for pain. In Chapter 1 of this dissertation, I discussed Laura Ring’s comments about the opening and closing of doors as the opening and closing of spatial and relational possibilities. I also engaged with Nirmal Puwar who comments on the role bodies play in altering the openness of space. These are all very much based in the phenomenology of embodied experience.

---

[87] Blunt, Alison and Robyn Dowling. *Home*. New York: Routledge, 2006. Lynch, Caitrin. *Juki Girls, Good Girls: Gender and Cultural Politics in Sri Lanka's Global Garment Industry*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007. Mies, Maria. *The Lace Makers of Narsapur: Indian Housewives Produce for the World Market*. London: Zed Press, 1982. Minault, Gail. *Secluded Scholars: Women's Education and Muslim Social Reform in Colonial India.* Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998. Ring, Laura A. *Zenana: Everyday Peace in a Karachi Apartment Building*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006. Tarlo, Emma. *Clothing Matters: Dress and Identity in India.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996. Wilkinson-Weber, Clare M. *Embroidering Lives: Women's Work and Skill in the Lucknow Embroidery Industry*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999.

[88] Engels, Friedrich. *The Condition of the Working Class in England.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958. Marx, Karl. *Capital: Volume 1*. Trans. Ben Fowkes. London: Penguin Classics, 1990.
The term was established by Engels and later elaborated by Marx in Chapter 25 of *Capital*.

[89] Mies, Maria. *The Lace Makers of Narsapur: Indian Housewives Produce for the World Market*. London: Zed Press, 1982.

The ladies and Khala frequently told me that the space in which one works dictates the quality of one's work, and this is directly related to the interruptions that comes with working at home. If someone works at home, they make less money. They work slower and the embroidery is messier. It's hard to concentrate, especially if you have children. Khala stated that the quality was always less than what could be produced in the Center. Ladies who worked in places even farther from home, such as Kadhai Ghar or centers based in shops, felt strongly about the quality of their work as much improved when they are as far away as possible from the distractions and interruptions of their home and their neighborhood. And yet, sitting in the Center, Shabana and Rehana wished for the ability to work from home. Rehana was working on a sari for a woman and she was excited to do this primarily from home because "*sahih banta hai*." "It is made properly." I interpreted this to mean that Rehana felt less pressure to work strictly and non-stop within the Center's operation hours. This was always a complaint that if their attention was needed for something at home, it was difficult to get away. These bits of information aren't new revelatory but worth noting as they reflect the diverse ways in which they interpret their domestic spaces in relation to work, comfort, and pain. When working at a home-based center, such as Khala's or Raziya's, those interpretations are further complicated.

These judgements and appraisals of workspace continue alongside their understanding of external domestic workspaces as places for the management of pain and distress. The ease with which testimonies are given in the Center relates closely to comfort with the domestic space, even if it is not one's own. In Chapter 1, I explored the impact of gendered bodies in certain spaces. That analysis applies here as well. The presence of female gendered bodies influences the space, making certain actions possible in space. One intention for this chapter is to renew the scene in Khadra chikankari centers as spaces for the management and testimony of the residue of

pain. This is in contrast to the previous chapter where centers hold scenes of knotted bodies. I return to some of those moments with a refreshed gaze, where women prioritize one pain over the distress of another.

There is something about working at the Center and being able to seek witnesses to pain as it is happening. By working at home alone, there is no immediate witness to what happens there. This is why the Center is an important place for even those who do work at home, that they may go to the Center to give their testimony. I found this most important with regards to the temporal pressure placed on kaarigars who work at the Center, to work quickly, with last minute orders coming in often. Because work occurs at home, the assumption is that the ladies are just sitting around doing nothing. They are a tap-able reserve army of labor. The demands on kaarigars change depending on a number of issues, but one of the most significant is that of time. This was the most frustrating and frequently vented. One particular event illustrates this. In the previous chapter, I mentioned a woman visiting the Center from Bangalore who wished to set-up a shop for items produced under the "Geographical Indications" (GI tag) of Handicrafts of India scheme[90]. A few months following that conversation, her order came in. She wanted delicate small butis scattered across neutral-colored linen stoles. The butis would be made with *keel kangan*. This style of design, accentuating only a single stitch motif across the garment, were increasingly in style in larger cosmopolitan cities such as Delhi, Calcutta, Bombay, and Bangalore. Such consumers were in favor of items that displayed their own interest in Indian craftsmanship (Kuldova 2016; Singh 2011; Tarlo 1996). These were unlike the pieces the Center

[90] The Geographical Indications tag scheme lists various crafts in India as produced in a specific region or city. For example, under this scheme, chikankari may only be sold as "chikankari" if it was produced in Lucknow city limits. The purpose of the scheme is to decrease the trade in crafts purported to be "authentic" but produced outside of the specific region. Embroidery items produced outside of Lucknow may not be called "chikankari". "Authentic chikankari" demands a higher price, therefore the tagging scheme is meant to protect consumers as much as kaarigars.

typically produced. Due to their less embellished nature, Khala was under the impression that little time was needed to produce one of these stoles. The expected timeframe was one stole per day. Even for fast stitchers like Shabana, this was an outrageous demand. Khala had made a promise that the items would be done by the end of that week. I don't recall the final tally of stoles, but the deadline was fast approaching, and the women were on the verge of tears and rage.

When I arrived, Beenish, who rarely complained, whispered furiously about the demands. Khala showed me the stoles and I remarked on how lovely and in-style they were. She replied that the city folks seem to prefer these less-embellished designs and were willing to pay high prices for them. Quite different than the style of embellishment they wore. She eventually left the room and I settled onto the rug. Khala tried to convince them to bring another stole home with them, or rather why not take two, one for you and one for your sister or daughter. Most women welcomed this kind of additional work because it promised a bit more money than the monthly income. I frequently saw the ladies bring home additional pieces. Khala and other center heads would try to make easy connections between their home (Center) and the kaarigars' home, to make the transition of work from one place to the other seemingly seamless, almost like you're working from the same place. They're both homes after all. This conflation of Center with home, and home as no better than another center, was a part of the complicated feelings around one's home. Swinging back and forth between wanting to work only from home or to escape home through the Center (as home), and then Khala making ever-increasing demands of doing Center work at home – these moves made domestic spaces extremely fraught. Because the Center was a home, family members felt comfortable interrupting work as often as they wished. While being located in the Center certainly made it easier to be productive rather than at home, the blurring of the lines between the two worked in everyone's favor; except, of course, for the kaarigars.

But what was different about this request of Khala's was that she was setting the terms of the finishing the items, not the ladies. The point of contention was who approached whom about additional work, and what were the demands made upon their time. Khala's attempt was to take advantage of a regular practice, but they could see through her demands as an attempt to negotiate something they generally had power over. I think in the end Khala offered them a bit more money and Shabana accepted. Khala had even packed up additional stoles and attempted to hand them to Beenish as she walked out the door. Beenish refused.

Centers are unique semi-public spaces. The nature of the spaces is similar to that engendered through social calls women make to other women's houses; and yet, in my experience, those visits could not promise the intimacy and privacy of centers. Centers, although placed inside a home, were, if possible spaced away from the center of the household. Such was the case for Raziya and Khala. Rooftops were prime spaces for them. Even for those located in the house, men were typically not around during the day and thus less of a problem. During social calls, on the other hands, if anyone's husband is present, certain topics are off limits. Centers were places where children could be if needed but often were not found underfoot. I found that by having centers in homes, privacy increased. Those located in NGOs, shops, or office buildings also had the capabilities of creating that atmosphere of congeniality, but you had a higher chance of being interrupted. Centers came in all forms and sizes, but they were typically a room separate from whatever went on in the larger space. When I visited a new center, one where I knew no one, it took time to for the ladies to envelop me into their space of intimacy. My hands and frame seemed to help ease things. I too could experience and appreciate the creation of space through my body with its tools.

While much of this chapter deals with words and gestures, there is another way to manage pain, and that is to simply be and/or work in space. To be outside one's home as well as to be in one's home (without men) are pathways to manage. Das points to the "descent into the ordinary" as a way women were able to move forward in their lives following the events of Partition (Das 2006). Descent into the ordinary, for all of the ladies at the Center, was, at least in part, a descent into the domestic and a descent into embroidery work. Shabana made a memorable appraisal of the Center as a place of work, relaxation, meditation, and togetherness: "It feels so nice in the Center, chatting with each other." This was said in the middle of a nice sunny day, conversation was easy and light-hearted, and, if I'm not mistaken, we were drinking tea and eating samosas. It was ordinary to be at the Center every day, and yet it was also out of the ordinary to be able to be in places outside of home without requests for permissions or informing a family member. It was ordinary to pick up the frame and work at it for hours on end. And yet to work uninterrupted was also out of the ordinary. I witnessed these ordinary practices mixed in with elements of the out of ordinary, and it is in part due to the overlapping of these two elements that made domestic spaces so complex.

The decision of which place is better, home or Center, seemed to be based on the action that seemed to be most at risk of getting done; however, for Tahira and Shahin, home was often a difficult place to be, no matter the labor. The Center for these two was the only place to get away from the more complicated family situations at home. For Shameen the death of her beloved sister changed everything. It was my understanding that she frequently stayed with her, away from her primary residence located at her elder brothers' houses. Life at the latter was uncomfortable. Her sister-in-law made life difficult and her position in the house uncertain. She also had a thyroid issue which increased the stress of the instability of her living situation. This

health problem also meant that she was not always energetic enough to make the short but not insubstantial walk to the Center. She was a relatively quiet person who kept to herself, but every once in a while, she would take advantage of the safe space the Center provided to divulge her worries to the group.

Towards the end of my stay in Lucknow, I was visiting the Center less than usual and working at Kadhai Ghar. Rehana also told me that the Center was not operating as much. Many people had stopped coming due to the weather and other family things. And yet, whenever I dropped by to at least greet Khala, I usually found Tahira in the room, working quietly alone. Later, Rehana told me that Khala always let Tahira come to work because her home life was so difficult. She frequently complained about the amount of work she had to do at home because she was the only one there to do things for her mother. A lot of her time was spent grinding spices on the seel batta. It was exhausting work and took a lot of time. The other women also talked about how her mother didn't treat her well and was a demanding person who didn't do much around the house. I met her once. My impression was a frail, small woman who lived in a house with many extended family members who tended to watch after themselves. Tahira was the only one for her to rely on and she was strong. Occasionally Khala took advantage of Tahira's capacity for labor; she would carry down buckets of water or take grain up to the roof to be dried. The other ladies would mutter in disgust that Khala would press these additional tasks on a girl who must already do these things at home. And yet, in exchange, Tahira was always allowed to work at Khala's, even when there was no need. These small details about working in the various centers in Khadra are what come to mind when I think of something Raziya said comparing her center to Khala's: "*kuch achhaiyan yahan, kuch achhaiyan vahan*." "Some good things here, some good things there." Tahira was permitted to simply sit and embroider and call

her boyfriends to pass the time away. Khala, undoubtedly knew about her contraband phone, but Tahira never took advantage of her silence, and Khala never divulged her secret to her mother.

These two situations are not intended to prove that the Center is preferred because it is away from home. To work at the Center was to work in someone else's domestic space, itself a complicated and often uncomfortable thing. We saw and heard things we frequently wished we hadn't. Intense arguments that devolved into screaming matches and tears, leaving all of us too embarrassed to even look at each other in shock. Alisha lived in the spare room on the ground floor. When she was with us during these moments, she whispered a few words about how much worse it gets at night. It was in part due to the fighting that she and her sister decided to move out about halfway through my stay.

Western scholarship about the home in early feminist works focused on the restrictions the domestic place had on women, keeping them from traveling too far for work or errands. For second wave feminists, it was a prison that they wanted to break other women free of. These were problematic stances for their lack of cultural awareness and accounting for geographic variability in what the home can be, represent, and who it can encompass (or reject). It also implies that the home is a singular place where women reside with blood relatives. But the home extends beyond the architectural walls to encompass entire neighborhoods or regions, as I've discussed in the first chapter. My experience in Khadra has been that there are gradations of home, with home being places and spaces where one may comfortably or not-so-comfortably reside. Geographers such as Yi-Fu Tuan base their analysis of home from a masculine understanding of space which women do not seem to fit in anywhere,[91] and nostalgic reading of home. My attempt throughout this dissertation has been to dispel such readings of home and

[91] Rose, Gillian. *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge.* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1993.

home-like spaces to better reflect how the women I knew felt and moved around these places. The architectural spatial aspect of the acknowledgement and management of pain through testimonies runs through the background of the sections that follow, not always so explicit as in the examples of Tahira and Shahin. In the remaining two sections of this chapters, I hope to expand on these analyses with more words and experiences as I was able to be present for.

Section 2: Compensating for fire and neglect/carelessness

Fire and neglect pt. 1: a need for an audience

In the area a few gulis away from Khala's place was the second chikan center in the area, owned by Raziya (Beenish's aunt). I wanted to see how things worked there, but the question of how and when to go was complicated. First, Beenish and Raziya were related. The relationship had soured, primarily due to Beenish's shift from that center to Khala's for the eye-pain reasons I outlined in the previous chapter. Beenish herself never divulged this to me. She never admitted to having problems with her aunt. Shabana and Rehana told me when it was just the three of us in the Center. Everyone at Khala's agreed that it would be most appropriate to visit with Beenish because they are family, but this was made impossible by their not speaking. Second, I needed to prove my loyalty to Khala. When I heard about Raziya's center, Khala was still unsure of my intentions and was not about to encourage me or to introduce me to someone else who might benefit from my presence.[92] Khala said I was more than welcome to go, but her facial expression conveyed a different message entirely. Not prepared to squander my first meaningful connection in the industry, I put it off.

[92] From Khala's perspective there were many potential benefits to my presence. The first being that I must have some kind of business contacts in the US and that I would, in the end, supply those to her. My protestations to the contrary never stuck. She also hoped that I would be able to help her nephew get a job in the US, any job of any type. Again, I had to disappoint them in this. In the end, I believe she thought that I was supplying all of this help to Rehana. After I left, Rehana told me that Khala and Shabana made so many side comments about me "abandoning" her (i.e., I had not provided her with regular work or wealth to make work not necessary), that the former eventually left the Center due to the harassment. Fortunately, Rehana was able to find new employment before too long.

The date of my departure from Lucknow drew near and I made up a list of people I hoped to see in the remaining days. With the exception of one very brief visit to Raziya's at the end of a workday and chaperoned by Shahin,[93] I hadn't spent any time there. Rehana, at the time, had been unemployed for a while. She worked for a brief time at a center in Chowk with better wages, but the pollution from travel made her feel ill. Also, her doctor had just diagnosed her with diabetes and hypothyroidism. She debated staying at home to work on pieces that came to her through her network, however, she said her patience with the nearby neighborhood women, mostly non-working mothers, was growing thin. All they did, she said, was complain and gossip. Rehana changed her mind about the presiding opinion at the Center of how lovely it would be to work from home in comfort. To pass the time, and to quench her own interest in zardozi (she started learning from Asif with me), she occasionally introduced me to some zardozes who lived around the corner. She was bored and missing the company of other women in the space of the Center.

One of these days, she agreed to take me to Raziya's center. It was just after lunch time, so we figured we'd stay there until the end of the workday. I was a bit nervous because it had been so long since my first visit and I was concerned about how rude and presumptuous the visit would appear. If Raziya felt any of those things, she did not show it. We were both warmly greeted by the 15 or so women in the covered open air, under construction-looking space. Rehana, always the favorite with everyone we encountered, was even more enthusiastically

[93] Shameen lived near Raziya and interacted with her as a neighbor, not a previous employer. Also, while she did work frequently at Khala's Center, she did rely on the income in the same ways as the other ladies do. On the day of the visit, she was planning on visiting Raziya at the end of the day just to chat and invited me along. The last minute nature of the visit put Khala on the spot and she half-heartedly encouraged me to go. The next day she asked me how the visit went and I responded that it was interesting to see how other centers operated. I commented on the difficult nature of the two-strand embroidery. This was an attempt to communicate that I intended to remain loyal to her Center where the embroidery was three-stranded and therefore easier on the eyes. The exchange seemed to (at that moment) put to rest concerns she may have.

greeted (in part because everyone, I soon found out, was anticipating a story). There was a general shifting around as two spaces were made for us. Six yards of sari fabric, heavy and encrusted with two-stranded chikan, sat across laps, with each woman hooked in via their circular frames. It is a strategic puzzle to find a place to sit, but the comfort that always comes with sitting knee-to-knee, surrounded by cloth and other women, was (and is) sublime. I had spent the last few weeks with zardozi workers at the adda which brings a different sense of embodied labor and camaraderie. These are gendered and bodied spaces, and I fit in quite differently in each. Rehana and I settled in gratefully. She looked particularly happy to be there. Even though she had never worked for Raziya, these women were all known to her. Her house is within spitting distance.

The center is located on the rooftop of Raziya's home which she shared with her brother, a zardozi kaarigar (who I knew, small world that this is, from Kadhai Ghar), and other family members. The rooftop (*chhat*) is a typical place for women to spend time, especially during the winter. One of the chikan kaarigars from the institute even kept pet goats (one whose name was Rubi) on the rooftop and played with them by running around the roof. It was a bit thrilling considering the goat (or you) could topple over the side. Raziya's roof was accessible through a set of stone steps outside the house. There were two sections to the roof. One was uncovered and located along the edge of the building near the street. The other was located towards the back of the house, snug against the wall of the next-door house. This section was partially constructed, better for particularly hot and sunny days like this day. It was, however, quite annoying to the women because the house next door had a bored, "lazy" (*sust*) son who did nothing but listen to Bollywood music at an impressive volume all day. Apparently, he turned it up higher when one of the women yelled at him to turn it down.

Everyone was peppering Rehana with questions about the dramatic events of the night before. They had heard about it through the neighborhood grapevine. I was in the dark. We just spent two hours at her home, and she had told me nothing of the drama! Fortunately, I was, yet again, present for this story and testimony. Rehana, pleased with the attention, began.

Late the previous night, she and her daughters were preparing dinner. One of them opened the gas cylinder valve on the connection piece between the canister and the pipe that connected it to the actual stove. They then turned on the gas on the stove and lit it with a match. At some point in this process, the canister exploded. In the center, the ladies told me this happens often when there's only a little gas left. Pressure builds up in the mostly empty canister creating a mini (or not so mini) explosion. This is how many accidental kitchen fires happen. Because of the regularity of such accidents, in-laws who attempt (and often succeed) to murder their daughters-in-law by dousing them in gasoline and setting them alight, will use this as an explanation, saying the canister must have exploded because it was empty.

The women at Raziya's informed me these accidents are regular occurrences. After Rehana's canister exploded, gas filled the enclosed kitchen, and everyone began choking on fumes. The explosion threw off a few sparks setting some cloth alight. One of Rehana's daughters, quick on her feet, fetched water and put the flames out. At this point in the story, Rehana had worked everyone up; there were cries of sympathy and requests for more details. She said that she and her daughters were sure they would die in flames in the night, hoping that there would be no other stray sparks to cause another fire. (Her husband, unsurprisingly, was absent from this tale. He rarely warrants a mention unless I ask where he is.) Hilariously, everyone was smiling and laughing throughout. The event had already happened, and no one was hurt, so they were free to enjoy the story without concern for unfulfilled tension. Everything was resolved. On

our walk back to Rehana's, I asked her if she still wanted to work from home. She said she would call the center in Chowk the next day to start work again.

In this second section (and the three parts that make it up), I focus on neglect and carelessness. The response to this is emotional care labor in the form of bearing witness to testimonies of pain and distress. With each successive part I dive into the meaning of neglect and its effacement through acknowledgement. I look closely at the need for spaces where this labor may happen. In the second part, I look at the power of telling someone else's testimony of fire and the troubling occurrence of neglect by family. In the third and final part I discuss the opposite of neglect, acknowledgement, through the care of exchanges in knowledge and information.

I use the terms neglect and carelessness somewhat interchangeably in this chapter. 'Carelessness' comes from the Urdu word the women used most often: *be-parvahi*, without (*be-*) care (*parvah*). Most of the instances I encountered this word are negative, not in the positive sense of the word 'carefree,' or 'without a care in the world.' Other synonyms are thoughtlessness, carelessness and inconsideration. Another word used in this sense is '*fikr'*, meaning worry, concern, or thought. It is also meant to convey a sense of caring but tending more to a worry or anxiety toward something. I employ the English word 'neglect' to describe this ecosystem of emotional and mental lack. To understand these two terms – carelessness and neglect – is to understand, in this case, part of what makes up pain and distress – the giving of one's own emotional care labor and receiving neglect from those who receive that care. To feel neglect is to feel a lack of care. Those I heard about who behaved this way most often were husbands, brothers, and fleeting phone-based romances. Neglect points to the insecurities that come with being a woman – married, divorced, single, or rather, no matter, as far as I could see.

In the actual moment of listening to this story, besides thinking how terrifying this would be, I also wondered, why laugh after the telling of Rehana's story? It hardly seemed a comical event. I understand that when gathering together, the telling of stories, even if the content is upsetting, is in itself an event and welcome distraction from work. Another way I interpreted this, and other slightly queer moments, is that the element of the ridiculous is always present in precarity. If we don't view precarious things as ridiculous, especially if you are the subject (i.e., Rehana), then there is the chance that such events will become commonplace enough to warrant no mention. Again, the importance of having such events be speakable, to have the language to describe them, the space to vocalize them, and the witnesses to hear about them, all of these are a part of testimony-giving and the intersubjective relations which are built to make this a reality.

Part of the need for spaces like this, and Rehana's willingness to return to them, is the role they have in addressing the neglect that many women experience. Who else is there to hear about this drama and understand every element of the story in the way she experienced it, particularly the overwhelming presence of daughters and lack of husbands? Even if events like these happen often, does that mean that they should not be mentioned? This is a story of neglect because of Rehana's lack of the Center community to acknowledge this testimony, and the ridiculousness of it. Inherent in it is also the neglect of Muslims in Lucknow, which is the seat of the Uttar Pradesh Government, at present run by the BJP. Even prior to this shift in 2014, working class Lucknowi Muslims have been ghettoized into Khadra, among other similarly poorly infrastructured pockets in old parts of the city. These testimony-givers and witnessing-listeners are not all gathering and present to have a forum about how to take this issue to their local officials. There is nothing strategically to be done to address the cracks and lack of care that leads to occurrences such as these. These bits of infrastructural neglect that show up through lack

of gas, or lack of grain or lack of clarity to acquire ID cards, to mention a few, are often laid upon the shoulders of the women I worked with. To discuss them at the Center (and elsewhere) was in a sense a pooling of information about how to *manage* the cracks and to share in the *acknowledgement* that the situation was, as was the fire, ridiculous.

Fire and neglect pt. 2: kitchens

During my second week at the center, Tahira's phone rang, although this time, it was not her boyfriend on the other line. Her sister told her to return home right away because there was a fire. It wasn't clear where exactly this fire was located, but Tahira did not wait to ask. Her mother was old, delicate, and incapable to moving quickly. She hung up her phone, hid the phone carefully under the rug, and rushed out the door and down the stairs. We had no news for the next couple of hours until Tahira finally returned, out of breath and full of words. She didn't wait to regain her breath before spewing out as many details as she could. There had indeed been a fire, but it wasn't in her house, but in the one across the guli. It was a kitchen fire.

The gruesome details of what happened trickled out. A woman, her husband and four young children, including a one-year-old infant, lived in the house. She was cooking in the kitchen with the infant and the two-year old when, in the initial tellings, the canister exploded, and her clothing caught on fire. She was badly burned, but alive, and was taken to the hospital. The husband was upset. The children were to be taken care of by the neighbors until the mother recovered.

One or two weeks after the initial fire, I arrived at the center to Tahira, Rehana, and Shabana speaking to each other in low tones. I sat down close to them, pulled out my frame, and tried to hear their low chatter. They explained that there is no way that the canister exploded. She must have attempted to commit suicide. The reasons they gave were these. There were no yells

or screams for help once the fire caught to her clothes. They described her as a burning woman, sitting, engulfed in flames, as her children watched on. No sound escaped from her mouth. She made no attempt to put out the flames. The flames were then seen by a neighbor which is how help arrived. I asked them how they knew this woman and if she also did chikan with them. They said she did do it but only from home and not as regularly as other women who work from home. Discussion shifted to other accidental fires and the resulting painful and often fatal injuries. They claimed that the worse place to be burned was on the chest. Every person they knew who was burned on the chest had perished.

The center ladies were sympathetic with her. They exchanged theories and rhetorical questions. Why would she have done such a painful, horrible thing to herself? There must be a reason. You don't just randomly do things like that to yourself, especially when you have four children needing care. Who would take care of them now? Certainly not the husband. One moment that stuck with me was how they described the husband. I said, "He must be feeling sad and overwhelmed at the thought of now having to take care of everything, including the children." They laughed. He may be, or pretend to be, sad for a couple of days, but as soon as she dies, he will skip town like they all do, leaving the children behind for the surrounding families to take in.

Over the next couple of days, it came out that the villain was, unsurprisingly to all at the Center, the husband. They, along with other women in the community, had discovered, or rather concluded, that there were a few of issues that likely led to her actions. First, they described men as not very helpful or understanding of the anxieties and pressures that women must take on. At one point, Shabana declared that men, quite simply, must have no feelings for them to behave as they do.

"*Shauhar ne kuch karna hoga*." The husband must have done something.

"*Un ke bich kuch hua hoga*." Something must have happened between them.

"*Admiyon ko humari bat nahin samajh mein ati*." Men are incapable of understanding us and our issues.

"*Admiyon ko kuch nahin ate. Koi parva nahin karte. 'Auraton ko har choti bat apne dil pe leti hai.*" Men don't understand anything. They don't care. Women take every little matter to heart.

Apparently, he didn't work much and was constantly out spending time with other women while she was taking care of the children. With their financial situation already so dire and four children to feed, the wife took action, by the way of flames.

This information came to light because someone had seen her hauled away in the ambulance. She told the medical professionals and anyone who could hear to not allow her husband to visit her. There was no question that this meant that she did not want to see him anymore. It seemed there was no possibility that he had lit the fire himself. She did not fear that he might finish the job. She had tried to commit suicide. That much was clear, they concluded. But now they knew why, because no self-respecting woman in their community would just set themselves on fire if they did not have a good reason to do so. The woman died three weeks after the fire. Someone said, "Now the husband is free (*azaad*). He'll cry a day, that's it. The menfolk don't cry." He apparently skipped town. I never found out what happened to the rest of the children. Perhaps Tahira's family or others in the area took them in.

At one point, I asked Rehana about the commonness of similar non-accidents, attempts of suicide or self-harm. She said that the brazenness of this woman to set herself on fire was out of the ordinary. "*Hamesha nahin jalati hai. Kabhi kabhi nas kaatti hai ya ziyada goli khati hai*."

"They don't always set themselves on fire. Sometimes they cut their veins or take too many pills." Rehana viewed these actions as related to a general state of unhappiness and pain. When I brought up the fire many months later to check in on the children and the husband or if anything had changed, some did not immediately remember who or what I was talking about. How much care can one give before you move on to other things?

This event held the attention of the Center for about a month. The same details, assumptions, and vilification of men continued. They extended despair and sympathy to the woman, and showered insults upon the husband. Individual bad men were extensions of the gender. Any disappointing man led to descriptions of experiences the women had with disappointing men in their own lives. Beenish and Alisha were not ones to partake in these sessions. Their fathers and brothers, they claimed, were good, upstanding men who treated the women in their lives well. Although brothers would occasionally cause trouble by attempting to limit their mobility, it was surely out of care.

To exhibit this, I return briefly to a section in the previous chapter where Shabana and Shameen discussed their brothers' neglect. Carelessness and neglect by husbands were always on the docket of Center conversation topics. Sitting in the Center, the ladies often turned their ire on the men in their lives for not seeing them and their difficulties. Shabana rarely talked about the situation with her husband; however, after watching the Bollywood film *Nikaah* on my phone one day, she opened up about the day of the divorce and what followed. For a bit of background, the 1982 film is about the romance, marriage, gradual collapse of the relationship, and sudden divorce of the characters Wasim and Nilofar. Nilofar later marries an old college friend, Haidar, who was and continued to be in love with her since their school days. It is a film about the neglect of women in marriage and how they are often at the whim of their husbands' emotions

and moods. The most iconic scenes are at the beginning of the film during the titles, and at the end. In both, Nilofar gives a powerful speech about the state of women as powerless against the whims and carelessness of men. In the final scene, she faces Haidar and Wasim about the cruelty of their behavior, pulling her emotionally to-and-fro between them, and attempting to decide her fate without reference to her.

As we watched *Nikaah*, Shabana would nod her head and make comments about how well she understood the emotions of betrayal and sadness after divorce as they were portrayed in the film. I pointed out that without a doubt, the film is great, but also very, very sad. How could this possibly be her favorite? She responded that it depicted the real-life circumstances of Muslim women, her life in particular. In the film, the husband gradually spends less and less time with his wife only to divorce her in a fit of rage on the evening of a party to celebrate their first-year anniversary (which he arrived late to). Shabana said her divorce was also unexpected. Her husband too had spent little time with her and did not understand her needs (a common complaint against their husbands). Following the divorce, he contacts her usually to remind her that if she wants him to be a part of their daughter's life and pay for her schooling (or anything), then Shabana would have to give him full custody. The care he seemed to have for their daughter was only in exerting his control over her. Obviously, Shabana said, "I did not give up my daughter."

The ladies found daughters to be their most reliable support. During the same conversation we had about the "uselessness" (*be-kaari*) of brothers, on the opposite end are the daughters who were often their mothers' only allies. Shabana said that her daughter knew when she was sad. She would hug her mother and comfort her in ways, she assumed, a son never would. Rehana often relied on her daughters to help her. Following my departure from Lucknow,

Rehana and I keep in touch through WhatsApp. For some reason, her husband had grown to fear me (something I'm not comfortable with) and tended to abuse her less, for a time. Once I left, his physical, emotional, and verbal abuse returned. The breaking points for their relationship were his lack of employment and their general lack of money (and him spending it on alcohol). One night, they were fighting, and he declared that he was kicking her out of the house. Her two youngest and eldest daughters were on-hand: "Who are you to kick her out? She does everything in the house, and you cannot tell her to leave. We will not let you." Outnumbered, he stormed out of the house.

In the previous chapters, I discussed the shock and need to adapt to husbands' and brothers' inconsistent presence and attempts to grab power from the female heads of households. Such was the case with Rehana's husband who was often away. Neglect was often tied together with scenes like this; the attempt to strong-arm women to behave in a particular way, and then gaslighting her as the neglectful one. The stories I heard about most frequently came from Rehana and Shabana. Those interactions exhibit not just the desire for a space to discuss instances of neglect (the following section will deal with this), but, quite simply, the need for space and witnesses to put into words the events and troubles that go unnoticed and unremarked.

To dig in deeper into the concept of neglect, and the effect it has on women, particularly in South Asia, I turn to Sarah Pinto's book, *Daughters of Parvati*. Pinto addresses the neglect and abandonment of women diagnosed with 'hysteria' in psychiatric hospitals in North India. I selected Pinto because her play with language reflects the need for creative language that Das herself turns to for explanations of Partition violence. 'Hysteria' is a term generally shunned in Western medicine, and yet in Indian psychiatry it is used almost often enough to obscure what it actually refers to. The illness displays itself through a wide range of symptoms of varying

severity that reflect their historical, situational, and gendered context, as well as the power dynamics within the hospital walls and those at home. Staying in the wards, particularly those that relied on family to care for patients, meant that "sometimes new freedoms and intimacies became possible away from household pressures, while at other times the embrace of family life meant persistence of whatever had contributed to illness in the first place. Control and care were jumbled together" (Pinto, 163). Such situations highlight the significance of bodies populating particular spaces, and the extension of the domestic space through familial bodies. I found the Center to be a similar space of the jumble between freedoms away from home with the pressures of continuing with certain domestic requirements due to the proximity of Center to home. That I also identified a sensation of lack of care and neglect associated with the nature of their embroidery work made the Center a complex space to be in.

There is hysteria around abandonment – there is also hysteria around all of the womanly things. To explain the title of her book, Pinto writes:

> as Doniger puts it, Parvati is "a woman divided against herself, or rather a woman forced by her husband to divide herself into her polarized halves" (2000: 71). It has been ambiguous to me whether these stories tell us of incompatible and imposed components of womanhood (the things women are and must - impossibly - be, according to cultural schema), or whether these are inevitable things about being human, or relating to others, wild transitions we all dabble in (Pinto, 37).

Pinto and many of the doctors read into the prominence of hysteria in women as potentially related to cultural gendered expectations that arguably lie heavier on their shoulders. While I do not have the space in this chapter to address the veracity of one explanation for polarization versus the other, I would certainly argue that given the gendered nature of the concerns women with hysteria exhibit, gender is undoubtedly a factor. Burdens reflect gender expectations. The division of woman's self may be necessary to uphold them. I argue that neglect is a contributing

factor to this split. The idea Pinto describes is of two halves of the self *against* (not alongside) each other. What if we must process neglect through polarization? One self must separate from the other, lest both halves devolve together. Then, there is friction in their joint existence – on the one hand, the rejection that neglect occurs, and on the other, the acceptance that it occurs. This is heightened when kin and community are the culprits of the neglect. My argument in this chapter has been that pain management occurs largely in relation to space and the bodies populating it. Neglect is part of that. There was the need to talk about the fire incessantly. It was a month of coming into the Center to talk about it over and over again. To talk about the children and the poor woman and the wretched husband. In this case, the need to talk about pain and distress is not just to talk about one's own, but other's. In our conversations about family members, women would go back and forth between extraordinarily negative comments, to a near retraction and attempt to temper their emotions. The fire incident, and others, were ways to talk about the struggles they have with their own neglectful kin, and the Center was a space that made that possible.

In hospitals, and other inhabited spaces, Pinto points to the idealistic, yet false, dichotomies of s "freedom and confinement, abandonment and care" (Pinto, 29), and saw instead "collapsing differences between care (or integration, or belonging) and constraint" (Pinto, 36). In the case of the Center ladies, I am hesitant to use freedom and confinement to describe any aspect of their lives, and yet, it is in the interstices of these dichotomies where I found neglect and abandonment residing. Women can get lost there. In trying to understand the difference between freedom and abandonment, and confinement and care, neglect has the ability to assert itself in either's wake. Each concept has the potential to slide into its opposite all the while proclaiming benefit to the patient or kin. These were frustrating gray zones the women

experienced at home and then discussed at the Center. For Pinto, this is where hysteria resides, as something that conveys ‘distresses’ so well.

Is a push towards hysteria reflected in the fire? My purpose in telling this story is less to find out what the woman went through in her marriage and more as regards neglect. I never met her and knew nothing about her outside of this occurrence. She did not acquire work from Khala and the ladies did not know her well (excepting Tahira who lived next door). My interest in this is as something the kaarigars in the Center deemed extra-ordinary; and yet, while initially baffled, they quickly understood it and rationalized it by describing the husband with the same contempt they may describe the men in their own communities and families. What mattered was to talk over the silence and complicity of the patriarchy in the creation of distress, and to ensure that the episode was given a home in language.

What role do embroidery workspaces have in the ability to understand neglect, or enable efforts to mitigate neglect through intersubjective relations? Remembering Rehana’s brief comment about self-directed violence, such things are possible where communities of witnessing women reside. There may be limits to language. Pinto states, “in hysteria, the body may speak truths that voices cannot or it bears a particular kind of truth, one that is experiential and at the same time fabricated and hollow. Hysteria's relationship to trauma, on the one hand, and kinship and desire, on the other, have long called into question the nature of truth, particularly as voiced by women...” (Pinto 177). Perhaps this is why it was easy for the woman to stay silent while she burned. I cannot ignore, though, the potential of what does and could happen at a center like Khala’s, where abandonment may have a chance to find a home in language and in space. To be divided by trauma, and kinship and desire reveal struggles with neglect, particularly by those who are meant to provide care. To divide the self into two maybe a strategic way to manage pain.

Is it possible then for the side that encapsulates one's trauma to be released every once in a while, perhaps according to spaces that allow it? Pinto points to the unique situation of living long-term in the women's ward: "As new relations required an 'out' from old ones, women's lives showed the possibility of something outside of kinship that was neither abandonment nor independence but a horizon whose expanse might be threatening or promising." (Pinto, 112). In the circumstances of the kaarigars, they were very much a part of their communities and not able, or looking, for an 'out' of old relations. However, what centers, center-like, or quasi-domestic workspaces enable are connections with others beyond those relations made through kinship. These are of use in procuring work as well as in managing neglect. Pinto's description of women's lives in wards as 'neither abandonment nor independence' also rings true in the cases I witnessed, and this is often to do with locality (the rare exception being far-away places like Kadhai Ghar), gender, and the domestic-like space for work. Most women, with rare exceptions, were able to travel to the Center to, at least, retrieve work and socialize for a time.

The opportunities to talk and seek acknowledgement of neglect were tightly connected to the discussions of pain and distress. Who is there to listen to you discuss your pareshaani and majburi? Neglect comes in part from not having that space of witnesses to divulge these different categories of pain. Tension coils around the stomach so tightly that it makes work or even conversation difficult. Does relief come to those who put pain into language? Giving pain a home in language is an embodied act. How does that complicate the release of embodied pain? The next section continues with neglect and the Center-based emotional care labor of acknowledging it.

Neglect v. care and (ac)knowledge(ment)

One hand touching another is to engage in relationships free of neglect. To reach out and touch hands to understand the quality of pain of another person is to behave in a manner that is opposite to neglect. Neglect is about active and passive avoidance. Neglect seems to imply a longer temporal frame that hints at a gradual breakdown of parts. The cyborg worker bodies in old mills of Mumbai that Finkelstein discusses are examples of that process. For Nancy Scheper-Hughes, she sees this in the way the community in Brazil approaches the regularity of child death: "There is a failure to see or to recognize as problematic what is considered to be the norm (as well as normal, expectable) for poor and marginal families…Here, I am writing about an averted gaze, the turning away of the state and its agents in their failure to see, to acknowledge what should be right before their eyes" (Scheper-Hughes, 272). Neglect may also be present when a certain state, such as regular child death, is allowed to continue without interruption. The norm seems to be acceptable, or else why would it continue? Any attempt to cut across neglect, to disrupt it or, if possible, overturn it, especially if such attempts are made by the subjects of neglect, speaks to attempts to disrupt an unequal balance in power. Is it only neglect if, in the case above, the state or some other powers-that-be are doing the avoiding? Is it possible to instill care or acknowledgement that negates, or at least works against the power that neglect has on communities and individuals? Such possibilities point to a subject's refusal to accept the continuation of neglect. They are useful tools for an ethnographer to see and hear about how communities, or groups such as those based in the Center, make use of space, bodies, and language to do the refusing.

Neglect is endemic to the chikankari industry. I have witnessed those within, beyond, and adjacent to it (these would be kaarigars of different sorts) who find the working domestic space as a clear indicator of its lower status. Chikankari is a home-ly embroidery. It is neglected as a craft worthy of time and attention, and as such, those who create it are viewed with the same lens. It is, after all, just extra money, not breadwinner work, as the belief goes. Middlemen repeat to the ladies. They also say it to themselves. It makes sense to undercut the women's wages if the myth is that they only need something to do, not money. The assumption has been that husbands and brothers made more money. Some being kaarigars themselves, such as zardozi embroiderers, this may not have been entirely false. But Khadra, and other places where most working-class Muslims live, has changed. Muslim men have become increasingly unemployed and bored (some pinpoint Narendra Modi's rise to power as the exact year this began). The women I interacted with were in the role of breadwinner. And yet, based on the bitter exchanges I was present for in the Center, the ladies felt that their labor was invisible and neglected. The men had no work, and little hope of getting work in the city.

To manage one's neglect, chikan kaarigars shared knowledge of their situations. Das describes an engaged body and language: "They were able to both voice and *show* the hurt done to them as well as to provide witness to the harm done to the whole social fabric – the injury was to the very idea of different groups being able to inhabit the world together" (Das 2006, 59-60). After the acknowledgement of neglect as a wrongdoing how is it possible to reinhabit those same places where neglect takes place? For Das, inhabitation is not a "dramatic gesture of defiance", as "a gesture of mourning" (Das 2006, 62). By being in that space and speaking of neglect, one may confront it. In the instances of fire, women were together under the auspices of working

with their hands, as well as to bear witness to testimonies of pain. The Center creates an architectural space where acknowledgement may occur, even if the subject is not present.

A typical post-testimony practice was for the other women, as witnesses, to offer their condolences, their promises to pray and ask God to grant them peace, and to point to God and the Prophet as the ones who may take away worries and pain. One woman who passed by the Center to pick up some work told us about her son and the mischief he was getting into. These were dangerous times for young Muslim men. Police were arresting them for loitering, throwing them into jail, and beating them to or near death. Mothers were worried about their sons going out and inevitably doing something stupid and, therefore, dangerous. Women showered each with emotional support in the form of promises that God will correct the situation: "Highest Allah [Allah-tallah] knows everything, and he is very good, and can see everything. When one path closes, another one opens." Even if it is not in this world, then in the next he sees the wrongs against us and will right the scales when the time comes. These moments were so frequent that it was only towards the end of my time in Lucknow that I realized I should be noting these down. Who better to acknowledge and manage your pain than Allah? One can trust in his judgement of the situation, see how you were wronged, even by those whom you call family (i.e., son). When the women spoke in this way, it was truly a cathartic moment for everyone in the room. Even if you were not the subject of the attention, every woman there had expressed sadness around the neglect at the hands of their own family. The words you poured over one woman in a deluge were also meant to comfort you that Allah would see and judge your own case appropriately.

Another way to counter neglect is to provide information bits or tips. The information may or may not be related to a specific instance of neglect. I found these bits of information freely given. They were antidotes to a general state of neglect. The Center was a fraught space.

These women were each other's friends, "sisters" (*behin*), bosses, co-workers, and competitors. They spared no effort to learn about a particular event, person, or thing. I admit that when in the midst of a round of questioning, it was difficult to not get a touch annoyed. I had never been so thoroughly investigated. I couldn't claim neglect sitting at the center. Various topics included the best surma[94] to calm your tired eyes, to the best place for samosas (a tiny stand that frequently sold out, and owned by a woman, itself a rarity, around the corner). I miss my first host mother, Najma – and her random bits of information, cures for eyes (she told me which kajal – Himalaya or a Pakistani brand available at one shop in Aminabad – to keep dust from the road and other allergens out of my eyes), the best tea leaves to use to for chai (a special Assam tea merchant off of Latouche Road, again in Aminabad), the best store for raw silk (Gandhi Ashram or Modern Silk House in Hazrat Ganj). After a discussion of *surma* at the Center, I found an old "pure" brand and brought everyone a tiny 5-rupee vial. They were shocked I remembered. And yet everyone remembered which stalls I liked the chai, samosa, and *chhaat*.

The desire to advise came with stories of neglect, as well as casual violence which seemed to point to initial instances of neglect. This neglect was much more about a lack of care which then engenders its own kind of emotional violence. As I've mentioned above and in the previous chapters, to the ladies, particularly Shabana, Shameen, and Khala (the three eldest kaarigars at the Center), men seem to not care for women in the same ways that they care for each other. I wonder if by assigning this trait to all of men that it in fact allows the ladies to view them as a prisoner to their male nature, and to not take men's lack of care too close to heart.

[94] Surma is from the same substance of Kajal and it applied around the eyes. The stuff I found was powdered and grey. It is said to provide relaxation and to be cooling for the eyes. It's not in style to use anymore, thus I only found it in particular shops in the old parts of the city (Aminabad), in older Muslim owned dawa-khana (medical shops).

They came to see each other in the Center (and they don't see all women this way) as the only ones they can depend on who will care about them.

These are a few notes I made about a conversation I had with Rehana at the Center. Throughout a telling, her daughters kept calling her phone about a visitor to the house. Rehana, determined, kept plowing through the story even though it must have taken about an hour to get through it with the interruptions.

> "At the [Center], Rehana tried to tell me a story as we stitched, but she was repeatedly interrupted by her phone ringing with calls from home about someone who had just stopped by to see her, questions from her daughters, on and on. After each interruption, she picked up right where she left off. We got on the topic of violence against women and a general dislike of men because Tahira's friend was beaten up that day.
>
> Rehana had a female relation who was put in a bad situation when her in-laws, after the wedding, demanded 50,000 rupees from her family. Because of her financial instability, she said no.
>
> To warn and threaten the new bride, one night they doused her chest in gasoline and set her alight. When they called the hospital, she was ordered to say she had been making chai and the stove exploded. At the hospital, her husband never left her side, and she told everyone it was an accident. After much cajoling, her sister got the husband to go get them chai. Then she got her sister to tell the truth about the incident and the threats.
>
> The sister secretly recorded the entire conversation on her cell phone. When the husband returned, the wife again fell silent. The sister later played this recording to the police after which, the husband and mother-in-law were arrested and jailed. The wife died from her chest burns 8 days later.
>
> It seems to be a typical function of conversations to follow up the description of one incident with the story of another different, but thematically similar incident. In conversations about violence against women, these conversations would be about female relatives or neighbors, never far off."

What does it mean to tell someone else's story of neglect and violence? It is in part giving testimony of other women's pain, especially those who have died. Telling the story is an act of not allowing that testimony to die with them. They also tell these stories to learn from them, and

to teach others about the perils that come with being a woman. The older women would chide Tahira for being so flirtatious and blind as to spend her emotions on a married man with five children. And yet, within the same breath, they acknowledge that she is the youngest and they did not want to take away any joy from her youth.

During a separate story-time, Tahira talked a friend's recent trip to the doctor. Everyone jumped into the conversation telling her that she ought not go alone. Tahira placated them that her sister had already taught her as much. "My sister told me that whenever I go to the doctor, don't go alone. *Badtameez doctor* [Ill-mannered doctor]. He put his hands on my friend to feel her stomach and kept moving his hands up." Her sister told her to say the following if a doctor ever got too handsy: *Mein itna tamachar karti hun ke aap doctor bhul jayenge*." [I will make such a commotion that you'll forget you're a doctor]. And then, in a not-so-convincing tone, Shabana and Tahira tried to make me feel better (my attempts to hide my disgust failed) by saying, "Well, not all of them are creeps." The advice to the other young women in the room (Beenish and Alisha) was that for their own health and safety to never go to the doctor's office alone.

These stories were often told as bits of entertainment, as a way to pass the time. They hated going to the doctor because they never told you anything good or gave real treatment. The stories made a lesson about how even men as doctors do bad things. These stories of neglect or violence were inspired by what was needed – care and acknowledgement. To return to Das' words earlier about the purpose of acknowledgement, the space allowed you to 'be-with-others.' I found that one of the best ways of 'being-with-others' was the relief that came with being-with. What better way to be-with than to be with snacks?

Section 3 – Pleasure and pain management with snacks and na‘t

Chai, samosas, and daalmoth

Lest I give the impression that hands are only good for communicating pain, my intention here is to make explicit that hands are not restricted in the possibilities they open. They are also good for conveying food and chai to the mouth, and much joy and management of pain occurs in this act. I end this chapter with two parts of relief that focus less on the exchange of words and more on material exchanges in relief. The first part focuses on snack-time, and the way women and men kaarigars employed that time to manage pain and distress in ways that are often calculated. The second part turns to musical recitations of na‘t poetry on YouTube, and their ability to soothe frayed nerves and sadness.

In each of these acts the management of pain is central as well as seeking fun, or ‘mazaa.’ Anthropologists John Shapiro Anjaria and Ulka Anjaria, along with others, released a series of articles about the ways people in South Asia encounter, process, and do mazaa. The idea is not to negate the importance of larger political, social, and cultural issues, but rather to also acknowledge the same of fun. Matters of fun often are placed under theoretical microscopes, removing the how and why of what makes fun enriching to those we work with, and to point out why ‘fun’ shouldn’t be fun. The unequal balances of power are highlighted, and it is the job of the sociologist or anthropologist to point these out. Anjaria and Anjaria instead argue for the need to seriously consider mazaa: “This is especially the case when pleasure has the potential to generate new alliances, new modes of being in the world, and to dismantle elitism that underlies the distance between critics and the people we study” (240). The ability of mazaa to draw us in, the critics, ought to be embraced instead of a stoic distance constituted. At times I have worried about not maintain enough of a distance. My hands have pulled me in. I am concerned that my

own mazaa while stitching has clouded my impressions of these places. But it may have been my willingness to be pulled that led to my relationships with Rehana and others.

*****

To eat and drink during snack time was not just to create space-time to talk about pain and distress, but to stop it, halt it in its tracks. Everyone is relaxed, albeit with a disturbingly hot beverage in hand (this always made me nervous). The primary object of interest in this part is chai; however, the frequent pairing with a salty snack made for delectable and interesting combinations. In the first section of this chapter, I hinted at the significance of chai and snacks with my story about watermelon with zardozi kaarigars. Here, I engage with possibilities created by chai, samosas, and daalmoth (a dried lentil mixture, also known as namkeen). At times this is in the management of pain and distress, and at others it is just the simple pleasure, or mazaa (Anjaria and Anjaria 2020), of consuming something tasty with others.

To briefly describe the significance of chai, I turn to Philip Lutgendorf whose article discusses the meteoric rise of the beverage in the early twentieth-century in South Asia with locals up until the present: "Indeed, my difficulty in imagining an India without chai – the essential lubricant of nearly all social occasions and commercial transactions, and the quotidian 'fuel' of countless rickshaw-wallahs, artisans, and laborers in the 'casual economy' – is shared by many Indians today…[T]ea, in its role as default social beverage and hospitality offering, did not so much 'replace' anything else as create a new niche I cultural praxis" (Lutgendorf, 12). I associate many of my interactions closely with the description of chai as a 'social lubricant.' Some kaarigars would be surprised that I would drink chai with them, particularly taking it in the flimsy cups. They would often ask the chai-wallah if they had a nice, sturdy paper cup. They seemed surprised that I would drink chai from the same cheap cup they also drank out of.

Lutgendorf mentions the special nature of chai that cuts across social boundaries, particularly caste and class. While that might be true for the most part, I witnessed those who appeared upper-class receiving paper cups, instead of plastic. This notion of chai as praxis is present in my interactions with all kaarigars. This praxis is multidimensional and influenced by social and cultural understandings of gender, space, and class. My discussion of class here is limited, however I do acknowledge it as an important lens and worthy of a deeper conversation than this dissertation may provide for reasons of space.

Hands are instrumental in the consumption of chai. Everyone holds their tea in very particular ways, often depending on the cup, the temperature of the drink, even the position standing or sitting. For example, the chai I drank with kaarigars often comes by way of a traveling or 'hotel'[95] chai-wallah. He would pop by the opening to the workshops with a large silver metal vessel, and a stack of tiny, flimsy plastic cups. In Banaras, these guys would carry eco-friendly, no-waste clay vessels which, when the tea was done, thrown on the ground and often smashed underfoot. The plastic cups are cheaper and easier to carry. Because the plastic is so flimsy, and the tea scalding hot, you have to delicately hold the slightly sturdier lip of the cup between two fingers. You cannot squeeze too hard or else you crush the cup. The muscles in the hand necessary for holding the chai are somewhat similar to those for holding a needle. Although, holding something as slender as a needle takes a more focused grasp, with the small muscles in the fingers and knuckles doing most of the work. To hold a cup of chai you must be aware of the vessel and adjust your hand and fingers accordingly. In most cases, hands are vital to pouring the scalding liquid down your throat. I have seen people pour bits of chai into a saucer

[95] Lutgendorf identified the source of the term 'hotel' the ladies would use to describe the chai stands and food stalls. It comes from the description of "Irani hotels" which were the corner storefronts in Mumbai that they turned into cafés.

to drink it that way. I've also seen Rehana pour some of her chai onto a saucer with a piece of rusk and feed it to her cats. I have seen everyone – man, woman, child, cat, dog, monkey – consume chai.

Chai is ubiquitous in ethnographies from South Asia, making the task of locating specific volumes that address the possibilities of drinking chai actually a difficult thing to do. I have selected a few ethnographies that immediately came to mind, particularly those with an awareness of labor and tea, and what tea can do in ethnographic encounters. Throughout this section I will highlight those as I work through the possibilities I experienced in consuming chai. There is a larger body of work that addresses the labor that occurs on tea plantations, and I do not engage with those here (Besky 2013; Chatterjee 2001; Jegathesan 2019).

The sociality associated with chai is gendered, and this is tightly connected to the space where it is consumed. For example, Craig Jeffrey's *Timepass* discusses the public gathering spaces of tea stalls, located on the streets, where primarily men are welcome to gather to pass the time in the company of other men. Recalling Chakrabarty's discussion of the Bengali *adda* (different than the wooden zardozi frame adda), Jeffrey employs the same term to identify these meeting places where 'timepass' occurs. Here, young men engage with one another through chat, "developing distinctive masculinities and frequently proceeded through the performance of a type of defiant public admission of failure" (93). Jeffrey at one point notes the absence of women from the tea stall. Some of his male informants saw a stark gendered distinction between their tea stalls and the confectioner's stalls where women were known to congregate, with male students in a way making claims over the roughness of the tea stall and leaving the sweets shops to wealthy female students. With the additional element of class, the cordoning off of the hot and salty is an interesting way of claiming certain spaces for male students, particularly those from

lower class backgrounds. For the Center women, the tea stalls were very unwelcome spaces. A discussion about sending Tahira out to fetch the chai led Shabana to exclaim how much she disliked being around men. They stood around the stall doing nothing all day except stare at you as you waited for your order. Wasn't it so much nicer to splurge on chai and samosas, and then bring them home to enjoy in the comfort of the Center?

Before I get too carried away with the joys of chai, I must acknowledge that it does pose a problem to some ethnographers. The milky drink makes a frequent appearance in a seeming lactose-intolerant scholar's ethnography, *The Occupied Clinic,* with side comments by the author, Saiba Varma, about attempts to avoid milk tea, denying it when offered, and sticking to Lipton when possible. In many cases of Kashmiri hospitality, an invitation to chat will lead to tea which then may lead to dinner, and more conversation. This work is interesting because Varma describes the consumption of chai in multiple places – homes, hospitals, street gatherings. Chai has the ability to resonate with people, it seems, almost anywhere, although not everyone has the stomach for it.

What can be said about chai that isn't obvious? It is a delectable beverage for those who are able to consume it. Chai is distinct here from tea (meaning just the leaves). It is a milky, and at times spiced (cardamom, ginger, cinnamon, clove, mace, etc.), combination of a bit of water, tea leaves, lots of creamy milk, and at times obscene amounts of sugar. The balance of these elements is usually regional, familial, and/or personal. Preference for particular chai stalls and chai-wallahs is present. Certain brands of tea leaves bring up strong emotions. Rehana stood by her preference for Golden Tea. Some distinctly hate cardamom (elaichi) tea, while others made it with ginger if you're sick. I liked especially cinnamon-heavy tea, but few places made it like that.

The sense of satisfaction that comes with drinking chai that you are accustomed to or chai that is unexpectedly delicious is palpable in the air. Such moments occurred when we ordered our chai from particular stalls. The room goes silent, and we eagerly sip, dreading but also relishing that our enjoyment is on borrowed time with each sip bringing us closer to the end. This temporality of chai-time ensured that we savored these moments. Even though drinking chai is something quite regular, they differ so much from the pressure of embroidery work on the body. I drank chai more often when I worked with zardozi workers and yet each time was a time for the body, the fingers, the hands, and the eyes to rest and recover. It was always such a wonder to me, especially in the beginning of my training, to look up and around at people drinking chai rather than the frame, held so close to my face. It is for these reasons and many more unspoken ones that chai holds an important place workers in all positions.

The place of chai in the workday is accepted by both employers and employees – but only within reason. There was only so much time permitted to stop and drink chai; sometimes you gulped it down in one go if you were in a hurry and just needed a pick me up. It was usually too hot to do that. You would take tiny little sips, not really wanting it to cool down too much. If the chai was too cool, there wasn't any real joy to take in it. Tiny sips of the scalding beverage are like shocks to the system, especially after sitting in one position for so long. There was pleasure in the struggle to drink it. If you could drink it after it had cooled, the chai was worthless. I was always laughed at for nursing my chai too long.

The real pleasure, however, came in what was required in order to drink chai: the removal of work. You had to place the embroidered garment from your immediate vicinity. This was mostly because there could be no chance you spilled it on the garment. But by taking the chai away from the workplace, there was a sense of true separation. It was an opportunity for

recovery. And, of course, there were days when everyone was busier than usual, and they couldn't take the time and care with their chai. But there was always the effort made to take at least 5 minutes (but usually longer) to ingest the calming tonic. According to Lutgendorf, one of the initial selling points of chai to an Indian audience was to "make Indians more alert, energetic, and even punctual – in short, more like Britishers" (Lutgendorf, 15). Tea would make more productive workforce. Therefore, chai was encouraged.

It is common, nay, expected, for places like the Center, Kadhai Ghar, or larger workshops to provide chai to the kaarigars. Kaarigars expected their employers to provide, at the very least, one morning and one afternoon cup of chai to keep their hands moving. This was typical of most work settings across the board in India. When that is not done, it is cause for comment. Such was the situation in the Center. Even when we did occasionally get chai, the agreement was that Khala was not that great at making it. Too sweet, too watery, not enough flavor. The rate at which different centers and kaarkhaanas take breaks differs greatly, depending on the individual workers and the person overseeing the work center. Such family-run and -inhabited places are less strict with the number of breaks permitted. From my experience limited to chikan centers located in businesses, NGOs, and other women's homes, kaarigars made use of chai breaks to different ends. Chai, samosas, daalmoth, tarbooz (watermelon), or any of the other snacks were tools for employers and kaarigars alike, to managing pain and distress linked to embroidery, giving one's eyes a needed break, or really anything at all. I found these consumables to be simply about the joy and the pleasure.

Chai and labor, chai and leisure – both go together equally well. For those ethnographers doing studies about labor, they may not be able to work alongside (such as factory-based labor, tea-picking, or other types of artisanal work), and a well-spaced chai and meal breaks are vital to

research. One example is Maura Finkelstein's work based in one of the remaining mills of Mumbai, *The Archive of Loss*. She provides us with a detailed picture of the decay but continued existence of one of the once-great textile mills in an increasingly cosmopolitan city. The bodies of the workers are similarly seen as reflective of the architectural and industrial decay that leaves archives in the form of "industrial debris." Finkelstein's interactions with the aging workers of the mills seem to center around the consumption of chai and snacks. Because so much 'timepass' also occurs in the mill space due to lack of enough orders, tea consumption is high. It facilitates her research as well as the continuing work in the decaying industrial space.

To briefly describe the snacks we so often ate, salty things were preferred; quite different from the situation Jeffrey described of young college women flocking to shops holding sweet things. Samosas are the cheapest special thing we bought. The best samosas were available for 10 rupees (not an inconsiderable amount considering the ladies made little over 100 rupees per day) and the chai was 5 rupees. We ordered them only if someone mentioned a particular hankering for them. They were not cause for special occasion nor for a bad one. In fact, for special occasions, we sometimes got biryani (50 rupees). If there was a desire for an everyday salty snack, we asked for a few 5-rupee packets of daalmoth. These were mixed concoctions of dried lentils of any variety or channa (chickpeas), nuts, sev (crunch noodles), and spices. Shabana liked the plain ones with dried lentils, well salted.

There were a couple preferred places in walking distance due to the freshness, plumpness, and crispiness of the snack. Although they are in the shape of a triangle, really, the samosa should be so stuffed with mashed potatoes, chilis, and spices, that it ought to be closer to a circle with points where the dough comes together. Tahira brought these back in a bag made from the previous day's newspaper, the exact number of small silver-foiled plates with crimped

edges (just large enough to hold a samosa), and a plastic baggie of a chili honey chutney. While one had to be delicate and careful about holding and sipping the chai, the samosa, in comparison, was treated with reckless abandon. The full might of the fingers was employed. Agile fingers were important to relishing the moment of samosa consumption. In the beginning, like a novice, I dipped my samosa whole into a puddle of chutney. This meant that in the first bite, you didn't really get a taste of the mixture. I watched carefully how they ate theirs. Again, there is some pleasure in the struggle to eat a samosa properly. Unlike chai, people would deign to eat cold samosas, although the preference was for them to be piping hot. On some samosa occasion, Rehana explained the technique and the reasons for it. First, you crushed the samosa with your fingers into a mashed mess, ripping and tearing the flaky dough as you go. This process burned the tips of the fingers; however, it made it easier to pick it apart into smaller pieces with one hand as well as ensure that an equal amount of flaky dough and potato mixture went into each bite. If you were a chutney lover, you would then drizzle (or douse) the mashed up 'mosa, ensuring even distribution. You were then free to eat as you wish! The mashing was very important but that relied on the freshness and pliability of the snack. I recall we had samosas that were not from the woman's shop and were not fresh. I have never experienced such shaming of a snack. We had no choice but to eat it, but I knew we would never order from this place again. These samosa times were even more involved than the chai times. The breaks were longer and the anticipation of mazaa was higher. We didn't usually fill up the space with chatter. The point was to focus fully on the relief that snacks and drink provided.

I have very few chai, samosa, daalmoth stories written down because they were ubiquitous to how all of the chikan centers and zardozi kaarkhaanas operated. They were planned moments throughout the day that allowed for the management of pain, and perhaps distress. It

was embodied pleasure, with the chai and samosas weighing comfortably in the tummy in ways that each person must have felt differently. In beginning I would write down when we had samosas and chai, but it became a regular, pleasurable interruption of work, so I gradually opted out of noting it down. After I spent some time away from the Center with zardozi kaarigars, Beenish and Shameen said they were upset I had not been by, and, as a result, had decided to not order samosas until I returned. This horrified me and I retrieved samosas for everyone immediately. Such a sacrifice, I implored, was unnecessary. With samosas we always ordered chai. I, like Rehana, was entirely dependent on chai. I told a friend that the dependency most of the women (and myself) had was similar to a patient in need of an IV: a Chai-V, if you will. Interestingly, the women who I have grown closest to since I first declared Lucknow my second home – Najma (my first and now deceased host mother), Rehana, and Simi (who I lived with during this research) – were all hopelessly addicted to chai. Najma's doctor had even told her to lay off the stuff. She chuckled at that wickedly. A friend recently told me that Rehana was similarly in desperate need of her chai. They had even used the tempting beverage as a (successful) bargaining chip with her.

Consuming chai and samosas (or any other snack) were pleasurable ways to stop productivity and give the eyes a rest. It was also a fun way to annoy Khala. Recalling from the previous chapter Shabana's comment when Khala came into the room when we were laughing and eating samosas: "She hates it when we sound like we're having too much fun." While other places I visited weren't this extreme, the worry of any workshop or center was that the kaarigars would get too carried away having fun during these breaks that they would get nothing done. One leader attempted to instill a limit to the amount of time they could take to consume their chai. While that was never strictly followed, kaarigars are generally quite aware of the time

ticking away as they sip. Certainly the amount of permissible time depended greatly on the space in question. Many of the workshops are self-run with kaarigars as their own bosses. Their desire to finish quickly was to be paid quickly. Rarely was there an actual problem of kaarigars whiling away the day having too much 'fun.'

I had one interaction with a small kaarkhaana of zardozi workers, all from the same family, located in Banaras. They had the interesting and somewhat disturbing niche of designing and embroidering elaborate Catholic vestments worn by priests, bishops, and the like for mass. Having grown up in the Episcopalian Church myself, I had seen many of these grandiose, gold garments. Those brought out for Christmas and Easter were more embellished than the rest. Back in the kaarkhaana, we were seated at the adda which was held up with two stools at either end. The room was long enough to fit an adda for a sari while partially rolled, at least a few meters. That day they were working on an elaborately bejeweled cross and a few other small pieces. Seated near the door where the fresh breeze came in, they could easily converse with stoppers-by. I was invited to stitch the cross with another rookie.

At well-spaced intervals throughout the day, a traveling chai-wallah, stopped at the opening of the kaarkhaana, placed three tiny paper cups on a worn, ancient stool (away from the cloth), and walked on to the next room of kaarigars. During one of the many chai breaks, I asked them about their eyes. I told them that for chikan, we were always talking about our eyes. The young men quickly responded in the negative, No! You must take many breaks. They pointed to their chai. We love taking chai breaks. It disrupts the work. "Outside people think that we work straight through but it's not like that at all. We take breaks. We chat. We drink tea. We have snacks. More work, then more chai." Their elder, a man who appeared to be in his 70s or 80s, wore spectacles as thick as a pair of magnifying glasses. They gestured to him, admitting that the

eventual cost of this work was poor eyesight. Spectacles are, however, "*ek badge of honor ki tarah*", like a badge of honor.

Chai and samosas signaled to a longer break in the middle of the morning. Samosas were best fresh in the morning around 11. It ruined everyone's lunch, but it was such a pleasurable way to halt the tension of the day. The skilled hands were also employed, put them at the center of action again. As I spent more and more time with Rehana in her home, she would occasionally ask one of her daughters to go out and fetch me a samosa or chhana (chickpeas) simply because she knew I liked it. This happened at the Center as well. These small gestures put chai and snacks at the center of care, at least in my experiences. I would reciprocate and bring mithai (sweets) or other edibles. I was never allowed to buy samosas and chai for everyone. But if anyone ever expressed a desire for them, no one ever turned them down.

Na'ṭ

I conclude this chapter with a brief look at the role of music in the Center, specifically through the genre of poetry in praise of Prophet Muhammad called na'ṭ. These poems as I encountered them were typically sung or partially sung in Urdu by both men and women. I was unable to see if only women listened to other women, and men to only other men. The times I listened to na'ṭs were only with the ladies in the Center, and they listened to both male and female *na'ṭ khwan* (the title for those who sang na'ṭ).

Much of this chapter is about the role that spoken testimonies of pain can do to get acknowledgement, be that of one's own pain, someone else's, or just of their work. Similar to the previous part about snacks, in this section I look to acknowledge other modes of management. My intention here is not to claim that pain and distress are necessarily at the forefront of the ladies' mind every time they eat a snack or listen to a na'ṭ. Both were often forms of simple

'timepass.' However, I argue that the ease with which these activities are embraced and undertaken points to a sense comfort to be found in them and can therefore be relied on to give comfort and relief when it is needed. I choose to end the chapter with na'ts because the impact they had on the space and the women was different than anything I've discussed thus far. They brought a sense of peace and comfort to the space. They were restorative and actively healing. We would listen to them while we worked, or we would stop to listen. There wasn't a great deal of discussion before, during, or after about the contents of the na't or what spurred someone to ask to listen to one. The only way I can describe listening to them is by how the atmosphere in the Center altered, and how the bodies and faces of everyone seemed to me as we listened. To address some of this in a more academically rigorous manner, I turn to one scholar, Patrick Eisenlohr, who discusses just this.

Eisenlohr's study, *Sounding Islam*, looks into the 'sonic atmospheres'[96] of South Asian na't as they are experienced in Mauitius, a country where over 70% of the population traces their ancestry back to South Asia. Most are Hindu, however, the small Muslim population is active and follows the Barelwi school where the na't is a flourishing genre of poetry. This is in contradistinction to the Deoband school that views na't as a form of intercessionary poetry and therefore *shirk* (a form of idolatry or deification). On the island there is a great deal of concern about this, therefore many *na't khwan* (na't reciters) have received training from teachers based in India and Pakistan. According to Eisenlohr, na't are performed mostly in South Asia (Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan), primarily in Urdu, as well as in Bengali and Panjabi. People in

[96] Eisenlohr defines sonic atmospheres thus: "Sonic atmospheres comprise the mechanism through which transduction creates new phenomena in a Simondonean sense. Drawin on approaches to atmospheres in recent strands of phenomenology, I describe sonic events as resulting in the emission of energetic forces – chiefly differences in air pressure – that fill spaces between their sources and those perceiving sound while intermingling with the bodies of those receptive to them…such sonic atmospheres act on the felt bodies of those perceiving them through suggestions of movement." Eisenlohr, p. 9.

Mauritius listen in Urdu, as did the ladies in the Center. I turn to Eisenlohr because his and his informants' descriptions of na'ṭ relate to my experiences: "I had many conversations with my Mauritian Muslim interlocutors about what Naushad called the inspiration of na'ṭ, and they repeatedly told me how they felt captivated and deeply moved when listening to recitations of the poetry…[H]e stressed that the best na'ṭ recitations are the ones that are "touching," evoking the synesthetic effect of listening as the bodily sensation of touch" (22) To describe the na'ṭ as something that has the capability of replicating 'touch' harkens back to the relations made possible between two hands touching. It is this evocation of 'touch,' sonic and tactile, that is foundational to relations between intersubjective subjects. Touch also precedes the ability to acknowledge. The remainder of Eisenlohr's book dives into the power and authority of na'ṭ recitation through audio reproduction. He interviews multiple reciters and devotee listeners. His interest is in the increasing importance of CDs, cassettes, and videos in expanding the listening audience beyond the subcontinent. The topic of audio reproduced recitations (i.e., na'ṭs, songs, sermons, majlis, mushairas) in Lucknow, particularly in the kaarigar community, unfortunately, deserves more attention than I have space for in the dissertation. The field of studies about the oral and devotional traditions of Islam is extensive and engages with much of this material in a more in-depth manner than I do here (Bellamy 2011; Ernst 1992; Hyder 2006; Schimmel 1982).

Na'ṭ recitations vary in style, tempo, pitch, length, etc. What we listened to depended on the mood of the room and the reason for listening. Most of the na'ṭs we listened to were not upbeat hymns designed to tell you to go out and do something. They were slow, with a relaxing timbre. I found it to be almost meditative. They were not tunes with complicated or heavy melodies, with highs and lows to excite a crowd. Their purpose was quite the opposite. They were simple words to praise the Prophet Muhammad and mentions of Allah. There were a couple

of more robust tunes, slightly louder melodies. We tended to listen to these when someone was in a good mood and wanted to listen to something upbeat as timepass. However, the usual preference was for lower pitches and slow melodies. When we listened to bring someone relief, the na‘t reminded me of the cathartic moments when everyone would recall the power, wisdom, and judgement in Allah’s hands, and his ability to right the wrongs. It was the sense that their pain was acknowledged as legitimate. The na‘t provided those words of encouragement.

The first few times we listened to these videos, it was after we watched *Nikaah*. At that time, only Rehana had a smart phone and it was not great quality. Also, data is expensive. To spend it on watching endless videos was not something most of the ladies felt comfortable doing. Everyone has listened to na‘ts before, but there was a lot of potential to search for more through YouTube. Beenish was the only one who felt comfortable using the voice-to-text feature (her brother let her use his phone at home). She spoke into the microphone with a strong clear voice. She was usually the one to do the searches. I had no idea of the na‘t scene and neither Shabana or the others felt comfortable with the phone. We typically listened to some of the same five or so videos, half men and half women, some children. The ladies seemed to be operating off of the same repertoire and requested Beenish to search for particular ones. Most of the recordings seemed to be by reciters from Pakistan. The production quality was good, especially those that seemed to be from recitation competitions. Others were professionally videotaped and edited with fancy graphics and echoes.[97] The women and children were dressed in colorful clothing and their heads and hair covered entirely with a dupatta. We didn’t really pay much attention to the visuals so much as the style of singing, commenting occasionally on the beauty of the voices and comfort of the words.

[97] The echo is, according Eisenlohr, meant to give the impression of the expanse of Allah.

On one of these occasions, we listened to a particular track entitled “Marhaba Aaj Chalenge Shah-e Abrar” (Greetings, today we shall go to pious king). It was sung by a woman with the echo after each word. QTV, a Pakistani Sunni Islamic television station, was the producer. Shameen arrived at the Center and she was upset about something. It was only Shabana and me that day and neither of us were very chatty. Shameen asked if I could pull up the YouTube and play one of the videos. I couldn’t remember any specific one and Shameen only remembered a few words of the one she preferred. Shabana bravely spoke into the microphone those words and after a bit of searching we located the desired track. We started listening and Shameen closed her eyes momentarily. She said she was feeling a bit *afsos* (sad) that day and knew that this would make her feel better. I never found out what happened that day to make her feel this way but the na‘t seemed to have the desired effect.

Women manage the pain and distress stemming from work and beyond, in a multitude of ways, and at the center of those possibilities, I found hands. They are compelling objects to orient towards. They, similar to the nature of hands as explicated by Husserl, have a dual quality, with the ability to inflict and feel pain. The shared pain and work of hands is foundational for the development of intersubjective relationships. It is through these relations that pain is managed, acknowledged, given a home in the body through language, and finally put to rest. Hands through the work of embroidery created spaces for testimonies and witnesses. They allowed for stories of neglect, lack of care, and violence to be told to a group of empathetic listeners who could be trusted as witnesses because they too had knowledge of suffering (Das). Even with the words, however, management of pain did not happen through the reliving of pain alone. There were plenty of moments of fun (which Khala didn’t always like). Again, these spaces for mazaa were engendered by hands and hands were needed to do fun things (like rip into a puffy, piping

hot samosa). It is also through the feeling of touch that the words and sounds of the na‘t may bring relief.

Conclusion

Hands link with and touch other hands that leads to the foundation for intersubjectivity. They feel pain, cause pain, and move beyond their own skin to sense the pain of others. Their shared labor opens alters space and opens opportunities for one pair to tell their testimony of pain, and for the other to listen and by listening, bear witness. This exchange of emotional care labor is a primary form of pain management. By bearing witness to pain, the neglect that comes with the denial of pain’s presence and significance. To manage is also to experience and acknowledge one’s own pain as real. It is to give that pain a home in the language of the body; therefore, to give a testimony is an embodied experience. There is also joy, relief, fun, and pleasure in these moments. To laugh at and during a testimony is to understand the pain and the things that caused it as ridiculous. It is ridiculous to experience the neglect of one’s pain. Creating moments in the day through chai and samosas, or listening to na’t allows you to step away from work, and to focus, mentally and optically, on something else that nourishes the body. I found that often there is little the ladies could do to take away or resolve their pain. The things that caused it are typically a part of “slow death” and therefore ordinary. And yet the sway pain’s sway over the body may be diminished or softened for a time. To be a witness is to accept some of the weightedness of pain. The burden on the body may be lightened. To be a witness is not just about listening, however, but about emotionally engaging with the needed care of the testimony-giver. The bodies of kaarigars may remain knotted, but perhaps the witness may loosen the knots that exist.

Conclusion: The decay of Muslim bodies

Rehana's home was one of my favorite places to be. If it was just us and her daughters, the main room was a relaxing space to stitch, chat, drink chai, and nap. I wrote in my notes:

The home is simple and distinctly [Rehana] appi. The walls are painted pink. The room and its contents well organized. The room is decorated with fake flowers which she washes regularly. She said she likes flowers. The sheets on the floor mattresses and the proper bed all have flowers on them. The space feels purposeful and very much hers. [Rehana] was working on one of the light cotton dupattas for Simi. It was lively with kils and bijlis scattered and hath kathi around the edge. I worked on my dupatta. It was pretty peaceful with no husband and only the oldest daughter, Kehkashan, and her tiny daughter. She was speaking to us in her star language, walking around, playing with, or rather tormenting, the cats. At one point it was chai time and the poor cats were mewing when they smelled the milk so Raz soaked some rusk and put it and some chai on a plate for them. She reminded me of [Farhana's] Eid suit, so I said I'd bring it tomorrow with her Eid gift. The few hours of work were interrupted only by Munni, the tiny one, and Ahad, begging for money.

Her home did not get direct sunlight so it was a cool place to be in during the summer. Like most homes I've been in in India, she had a ceiling fan that moved at a near terrifying speed. She was constantly rearranging the organization of the room. First, the mattress was folded over in one corner with the floor entirely clear. Eventually she settled on it spread out across the floor with a flowery cover, creating a comfortable sitting space. As much as I enjoyed exploring Khadra with her, the pleasure of just being at her home was also great, even when those moments were mixed with pain. From these hours in her house, she told me more about other places she had worked, her older brother Asif's difficult time in Mumbai, new stitches, and drama with her daughters and their in-laws. My memories of fieldwork are mixed. Chikan was an opportunity for women to separate themselves from their other duties, *tenshans*, and difficult people (i.e., husbands). It created the space to feel pleasure in using one's hands to create something. It is interesting that

the coronavirus pandemic has encouraged others to find similar enjoyment in creating with hands.[98] Chikan is also capable of creating pain, of stitching it into the cloth and into bodies.

Pain and distress tell us about the lived body, its community, and environs. This dissertation approaches chikan kaarigars' use of language and the body as starting points to engage with the experiences of female, embroidering lived bodies. Any discussion of pain and the body must accept the frequent failings of language to communicate. Wittgenstein acknowledges this limitation as does Sarah Pinto when she states the problem of "missing it" with the experiences of her informants in psychiatric wards in Indian hospitals. It is this same missing "it" that I found to be present in the intersubjective relations between the ladies in the Center when giving a testimony and being the witness. As I discuss in the third chapter, the Center was a space where this "it" could be explicated through embodied movements and gestures. Words for pain and distress demand phenomenological attention to the situations and moments in which they were uttered and this dissertation has done that. The Center was a space where those who were already attuned to it (Stewart) gave their testimonies to receive acknowledgment. All of this is not to say that language in each of its forms is inadequate. Veena Das points to the moving words of creative literary figures such as Manto to convey the most ineffable pain of Partition. However, in the daily parlance of conversation, the body and others populating the space are capable of elaborating. The spatial element in these conversations between bodies is important as well. In the first chapter, I focused on the environs of space as something that is atmospheric. How does the environ impact the body, and the body impact the environ? This is related to how I saw the ladies interact with others in the Center; that is, they had expectations of the others in that place, the things that could be shared and acknowledged. In

[98] Kurutz, Steven. "What We Learned From a Year of Crafting." The New York Times. The New York Times, May 13, 2021. https://www.nytimes.com/2021/05/13/style/craft-boom.html.

this concluding chapter, I discuss a new set of "interruptions" that affect the whole of Khadra in ways that highlight the distinctly Muslim embodied experience and march to a 'slow death' (Berlant 2007).

*****

Young Muslim men in Khadra were a common target for the police. That's probably why in the December CAA (Citizenship Amendment Act) protests, the building they chose to set on fire was the police *thana* (station/department). Before that time, Rehana got a call from a family member informing her that a teenage nephew had been arrested for purchasing a used cell phone which was apparently stolen. Even though he claimed to not know that it was stolen, and the person who sold it confirmed this, both were thrown into jail. It was better to be booked in jail, she said, than the thana because there was a greater likelihood that he wouldn't be beaten, at least not too badly. Boys died in the thana. We were sitting in the main room in her house when we got the call. I was seated at the *adda* stitching away as Asif watched my progress. After she told us the news, Asif took out his prayer beads and immediately started praying, rolling each bead between his thumb pointer finger before he moved onto the next. He mumbled words under his breath, and I continued stitching. These *du'as* (prayers) reminded me of those he received from the ladies at the Center during the height of his illness, speeding him on to better health. It was a communal expectation that you pray for the continued health and survival of those that surround you. It only made sense to forward those prayers you received on to someone now in greater need. That week and the next, every time I visited Rehana, she told me about the flood of relatives at the house seeking solace and exchanging news about the boy. It was hard for her to make it to the Center because of all of the visitors. When she did make it to Khala's (she had to make money to help bribe the police after all), she talked about it a bit there too. I recalled

Shamim's comment about Khala's son, and concerns that if he continued loitering with the same boys, he would end up in a similar place as Rehana's relative. Rehana helped the boy's female relatives by providing what solace she could through chai, conversation, and some money to bribe the police to release him. He was, eventually released. Perhaps a bit bruised, but still alive.

Following that day, we had a few conversations about the police in Khadra and in the neighboring area, Aliganj. Rehana told me that Aliganj was considered to be one of the worst police departments in the state of Uttar Pradesh (UP) by way of abuse and violence against Muslims. Police in UP already have a reputation in India for being particularly corrupt, so I was surprised that Aliganj claimed the top spot.[99] When I told my host mother this, she said she wasn't aware of such a designation but again pointed out the overall corruption of police in the state. This information seemed to be one of those things that passed around the network of lower working-class Muslims, mostly kaarigars of some kind, throughout the region and state. Family members regularly traveled to other parts of the state and country to work. Perhaps this information came from outside perceptions about the ruthlessness of that particular police *thana*. There was no love for the police in Khadra either. Young men and teenage boys were routine targets for casual violence. While I was in Lucknow, an acquaintance told me that Khadra was the first area in Lucknow to use live-rounds against CAA protestors. The single death that day from the protest, a 26-year-old man, was in Khadra.

An important aspect of the experience of chikan kaarigars is the Khadra policing of Muslim bodies, and it is one that I hope to continue in future research. It is hazardous to be a Muslim body in UP. My experience of Khadra was not a place that had an obvious overabundance of police; however, they were more visible compared to other religiously mixed

[99] Jauegui, Beatrice. *Provisional Authority: Police, Order, and Security in India.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016.

or more Hindu upper-class neighborhoods. Zardozi workers I worked with identified 2014 as the beginning of the downturn, the first year of the first term when the BJP-led government was first voted into power, and then again in 2019, the re-election. My intention is not to say that anti-Muslim, anti-Dalit, and general anti-minority violence began under Modi's regime, but rather to indicate that casual and targeted political and physical violence appeared to increase with Modi's ascent. Almost daily reports of lynchings and mob attacks on one to a few lone individuals (many of them elderly) have become regularity.[100] At the time of lynchings in 2016 and 2017, few of these cases were reported by newspapers. Most were shared through social media and messaging platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp. This lived reality for North Indian Muslims has led to a tenshan-filled environment for fear of being policed while appearing Muslim or living in predominately-Muslim areas. Policing is not restricted to bodies that represent the power of the state through uniform (most important being a *lathi*, or baton). The increase in lynchings makes it clear that non-Muslims have taken the power of policing into their own hand and to ensure the slow and rapid death for the charge of being Muslim. Women must take on much of this emotional care labor by holding those *pareshaani* (worries) suspended within themselves. This dissertation is a small accounting of Muslim experiences of pain and distress, and these instances of police violence were significant additions to those embodied experiences. I have not attempted to portray the experiences of Hindu women and their contributions to the chikan industry. Worthy of time and attention though they may be, their place in the chikan world, particularly those women who are recent trainees, is quite different than those who I worked with who followed at least a few generations of chikan practitioners.

[100] Frayer, Lauren. "'This Is It. I'm Going To Die': India's Minorities Are Targeted In Lynchings." NPR. NPR, August 21, 2019. https://www.npr.org/2019/08/21/751541321/this-is-it-im-going-to-die-indias-minorities-are-targeted-in-lynchings.
"Hunted - India's Lynch Files." The Quint. The Quint. Accessed June 5, 2021. https://www.thequint.com/quintlab/lynching-in-india/.

The embodied experience of the ladies in the Center is the focus of this dissertation. Embroidery was central to most of my interactions even if it was not the central topic of discussion. Here I would like to keep the hands in the background and return to the concept of the knotted body, except instead of looking at the knotted body as a kaarigar, I look at the knotted body of a kaarigar as an example of an embodied Muslim experience. To be a Muslim kaarigar was, perhaps, to be a knotted body, except instead of the experience of labor, it is the body as encompassing the visible and invisible markers of a perceived Indian Sunni Muslim identity. The religiously marked body gets further situated by its class and geographic location. The Muslim experience for kaarigars in Khadra was quite different than that of middle- and upper-class Muslims living in mixed neighborhoods, such as my various living arrangements since my first trip to the city in 2008. I lived in middle-class apartments and gated homes in relatively affluent areas of the city.[101] The lower working-class area of Khadra and Aliganj was more obviously policed than in other parts of the city. Loitering unemployed young men were particular targets. When I returned to Lucknow six months after my fieldwork, Rehana told me about some men who had harassed girls as they left school somewhere near the mohalla. She and I noticed a policeman in turn harassing other young men standing on the other side of the street from a school. Rehana said they were protecting Muslim women (from the men in their communities). She didn't sound convinced though. Gayatri Spivak's phrase of "white men are saving brown women from brown men" comes to mind, except in place of the colonial savior, we have the Hindutva state protecting Muslim women from Muslim men (Spivak 1988). Mothers had to be resourceful to keep their boys at home. To keep her son safe, Khala set up the small general store from the ground floor of her house to keep him busy, off the streets, and away from

[101] The families I lived with over the years were established host families who provided living quarters to Western students and scholars.

the police. These experiences were of great concern to the women in the Center and produced ancillary pain through distress. There is a psychological toll on women that comes with the constant pareshaani and *tenshan* that their boys may end up in the jail or in the thana. Both promised violence.

With the increase in reporting through primarily medium-sized, left-leaning news outlets such as The Wire, The Quint, Caravan, and NDTV (particularly the journalist Ravish Kumar)[102], the families of victims have been placed in the center of these stories, often as the sole witnesses or survivors. This reporting gives women a unique opportunity to speak of their pain to an audience willing to listen and acknowledge. Their pain is portrayed as central to lynchings. Instances like the arrest of Rehana's nephew, or police's daily harassment of young Muslim men are less often reported and acknowledged. The Center is an important site, therefore, for the testimonies of violence and for women to share their pareshaani and tenshan.

These problems that Muslim bodies encounter are enhanced at moments of crisis, like CAA resistance and Covid-19, two ongoing moments that impacted my research field after my departure, but in ways that I cannot overlook. My time in Lucknow was testament to the constant shifting of the industry and the ways in which women accommodate those shifts. Women play particular roles in these moments of discomfort, typically taking the form of care labor, be that physical or emotional. Throughout the CAA protests, women continued to work, albeit in a limited fashion, as the men in their communities turned out to protest in droves. In Delhi, images of women of all ages and socio-economic backgrounds sitting in Shahin Bagh surfaced in the news and on social media. My experience in Lucknow was quite different. Women – mostly students, activists, NGO workers, or other college-educated women – showed up in certain areas

[102] The family I lived with during my fieldwork were superfans of Ravish Kumar.

of the city such as Aminabad and Hazrat Ganj. Khadra was not like this. While the streets there were not completely devoid of women, they did not show up in the same numbers. When clashes between the police and protesters started in these other places with female protestors, men on the ground implored them to leave before things got bad. They said that once the police get going, it's hard to pull them back. They can't, or won't, control themselves and where their lathi falls. No one in Khadra trusted the police to behave in a non-combative way, so women stayed away from Sitapur Road where the main action was. It would appear the question of who is protecting who from whom has shifted considerably. A disciplinary force previously enforced to keep a colonial subject population in line has turned its gaze upon its own citizen body.

During these peaks in police-supported and enforced anti-Muslim political violence, I am reminded on Shamim. When we sat in the Center as someone gave testimony to a pain, if there was someone or something to blame, the ladies would pray for Allah to speedily right the wrongs done against them. "Allah tallah sab kuch thik karta hai." Allah will fix everything. By believing in Allah's ability to fix and maintaining their faith, they actively managed their own pain. Even if it couldn't be fixed in this life, knowing that Allah saw everything was assurance enough that retribution was possible. Syed Akbar Hyder's research in *Reliving Karbala* discusses the social and literary practices and panreligious significance of Karbala and the importance of collective mourning and healing through majlis gatherings. Carla Bellamy's work, *The Powerful Ephemera*, focuses on the element of space by addressing the role of dargahs (Sufi shrines) across the religious communities in providing physical, emotional, and spiritual healing for sickness focuses on the element of space. Remedial and restorative Islamicate (Hodgson 1974) practices is one potential avenue of further research, specifically in relation to the *n'ats* briefly discussed at the end of the third chapter.

The connections between these religio-political encounters and forms of institutional Islamophobia are indisputable. Working in Khadra showed that the latter often took the form of infrastructural decay leading to the decay of Muslim bodies. Lauren Berlant's concept of "slow death" is again fitting here. To be Muslim in India may lead to an inevitable slow death. To be Muslim in India is a "life-denying consequence" affecting all facets of cultural and social life and leading to "excess death" (Gupta 2012). Communities took on the responsibility to address gaps in governmental care. In the mohalla, the residents had painstakingly raised money to re-cobble the paths. As Beenish took me to her house for the first time, we picked our way through the construction. She said the project was a long time coming considering the hurdle of raising money. How to deal with the slow death march that comes with living in areas of the city that have been mostly left out of progressive plans for the city (i.e., not Metro stop)? While this dissertation did not thoroughly address these issues, they lead to possible avenues of future research.

My limited experiences to certain areas of Khadra and Chowk included endemic situational and generational illnesses such as diabetes, thyroid, dengue, and chikungunya. In the first chapter I commented on the pollution illness Rehana experienced that came with a reliance on public transportation. Regardless of incontrovertible evidence of Islamophobic governing practices through a lack of institutional care and development of such Muslim populated areas, upper class and caste residents of the Lucknow in one-on-one conversations turned the blame on working class Muslims. It became an issue of class instead of Islamophobia. Remarkable to me were periods during the lulls in high and low political drama (like CAA), when illness was there, as usual, but what was apparently lacking was a conspicuous connection between illness and the state. I often heard upper-class and -caste Hindus and Muslims blaming residents of Khadra for

not taking 'care' (*parva* in Urdu, but here, read, 'hygiene') or being aware (*khayal*) of themselves. It is this, they thought, that led them to their weakened physical state. Health ministers and other upper-class Indians writing tweets, opinion pieces, and blogs, played a similar blame game with the April 2021 Covid-19 surge, pointing wagging fingers at the "undisciplined" masses who showed up to political rallies held by Prime Minister Modi and his crew.[103] Illness is a bodily residue that comes with being a working-class Muslim and living in a place may be representative of that station. And now, Covid-19. Indeed, the coronavirus pandemic has made it all the more difficult to manage illnesses such as diabetes and thyroid, both which require regular medicine to maintain. Rehana expressed fear of the circulating virus and has therefore foregone her regular trips to the chemist to retrieve her medications.

There is no adequate way to finish this dissertation. As I write these words, the city I called home during my fieldwork (and many other summers and semesters before that), along with the rest of the country, is engulfed in a deluge of fresh covid-19 cases and an absolutely crushing level of death. No one is stitching right now. Who is there to buy it? Can craft heritage die with the pandemic? It's possible, as so many bodies at the highest risk of illness are those that harbor the skills and ability to teach new generations. The grave pandemic-related circumstances of embroidery kaarigars has even captured the attention of major news outlets, The New York Times and CNN.[104] The previous political crises – the implementation of the

[103] Krishnan, Raghu. "Why Blame the Government for the Second Covid Wave When We Indians Are so Undisciplined." Economic Times Blog. The Economic Times, April 15, 2021. https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/blogs/andwordsisallihave/why-blame-the-government-for-the-second-covid-wave-when-we-indians-are-so-undisciplined/.
Venkataramakrishnan, Rohan. "Harsh Vardhan Blames Ordinary Indians for Covid-19 Surge – Ignoring BJP Rally Tweets on His Own Feed." Scroll.in. Scroll.in, April 8, 2021. https://scroll.in/article/991690/harsh-vardhan-blames-ordinary-indians-for-covid-19-surge-ignoring-bjp-rally-tweets-on-his-own-feed.

[104] Paton, Elizabeth. "India's Fashion Artisans Face 'Extreme Distress' in Pandemic." The New York Times. The New York Times, April 25, 2021. https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/25/fashion/india-garment-workers-luxury.html.

CAA and threat of a Muslim registry, the regular lynchings of Muslim bodies, the recent 2019 re-election of BJP as ruling party – seem almost forgotten in the wake of this new onslaught that doesn't seem to spare anyone. The quasi-haven of Khala's Center is no longer operational, as are probably most karkhanas. Women who often picked up their frame and needle to avoid the state of "*khali haath nahin bethna*" (don't sit empty handed) and other tenshan-inducing troubles are in the strange situation, perhaps welcome to some and unwelcome to others, of not having the option to embroider. The new source of tenshan is widely acknowledged by the world, but what good is the world as witness.

Holland, Oscar. "Indian Artisans Struggle to Survive in Fashion's 'Invisible Supply Chains'." CNN. Cable News Network, May 2, 2021. https://www.cnn.com/style/article/india-fashion-artisans-covid/index.html.

Bibliography

Abu-Lughod, Lila. “The Romance of Resistance: Tracing Transformations of Power Through Bedouin Women.” In *American Ethnologist.* Vol. 17, No. 1 (Feb., 1990), p. 41-55.

Adkins, Lisa and Maryanne Dever. “The Financialisation of Social Reproduction: Domestic Labour and Promissory.” In Lisa Adkins and Maryanne Dever eds. *The Post-Fordist Sexual Contract.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, 129-145.

Ahmed, Sara. *Queer Phenomenology*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006.

Ahmed, Sara. *Willful Subjects*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014.

Amin, Shahid. *Sugarcane and Sugar in Gorakhpur: An Inquiry into Peasant Production for Capitalist Enterprise in Colonial India*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1984.

Anjaria, Jonathan Shapiro and Ulka Anjaria. “*Mazaa*: Rethinking Fun, Pleasure and Play in South Asia.” In *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*. Vol. 43, No. 2 (2020), pp. 232-242.

Atal, Saloni and Juliet Foster. ““A woman's life in tension”: A gendered analysis of women's distress in poor urban India.” In *transcultural psychiatry*. Vol. 0, No. 0 (2020), pp. 1-10.

Bachelard, Gaston. *The poetics of space.* Translated by Maria Jolas. Boston: Beacon Press, 1994.

Baron, Ava and Eileen Boris. ““The Body" as a Useful Category for Working-Class History.” In *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas*. Vol. 4, No. 2 (2006), pp. 23-43.

Beck, Julie. “The Concept Creep of ‘Emotional Labor’.” *The Atlantic*. Atlantic Media Company, November 26, 2018. https://www.theatlantic.com/family/archive/2018/11/arlie-hochschild-housework-isnt-emotional-labor/576637/.

Behar, Ruth and Deborah A. Gordon eds. *Women Writing Culture.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995.

Bellamy, Carla. *The Powerful Ephemeral: Everyday Healing in an Ambiguously Islamic Place*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011.

Berlant, Lauren. “Slow Death (Sovereignty, Obesity, Lateral Agency.” In *Critical Inquiry.* Vol. 33 (Summer 2007), pp. 754-780.

Besky, Sarah. *The Darjeeling Distinction: Labor and Justice on Fair-Trade Tea Plantations in India*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013.

Blunt, Alison. "Imperial Geographies of home: British domesticity in India, 1886-1925," in *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*. Vol. 24, Issue 4 (December 1999), pp. 421-440.

Blunt, Alison and Robyn Dowling. *Home*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Bordo, Susan. *Unbearable Weight: Feminism, Western Culture, and the Body*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993, pp. 277-300.

Borneman, John and Abdellah Hammoudi. *Being There: The Fieldwork Encounter and the Making of Truth*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009.

Bourdieu, Pierre. "The Field of Cultural Production, or: The Economic World Reversed." In *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1993.

Braver, Lee. *Groundless Grounds: A Study of Wittgenstein and Heidegger*. MIT Press, 2012.

Breman, Jan. *Footloose Labour: Working in India's Informal Economy*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Butalia, Urvashi. *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2000.

Caraway, Teri L. *Assembling Women: The Feminization of Global Manufacturing*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007.

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000.

Chakrabarty, Dipesh. *Rethinking Working-class History: Bengal, 1890-1940*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989.

Chandavarkar, Rajnarayan. *Imperial Power and Popular Politics: Class, Resistance and the State in India, c.1850-1950.* Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1998.

Chandavarkar, Rajnarayan. *The Origins of Industrial Capitalism in India: Business Strategies and the Working Classes in Bombay, 1900-1940.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Chatterjee, Piya. *A Time for Tea: Women, Labor, and Post/Colonial Politics on an Indian Plantation*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001.

Chattopadhyay, Kamaladevi. *Handicrafts of India.* New Delhi: Indian Council for Cultural Relations, 1985.

Classen, Constance ed. *The Book of Touch*. London: Routledge, 2020.

Cohn, Bernard S. "Cloth, Clothes, and Colonialism: India in the Nineteenth Century," in *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University University, 1996, pp. 106-162.

Crang, Mike and Nigel Thrift eds. *Thinking Space.* London: Routledge, 2000.

Csordas, Thomas J. "Embodiment as a Paradigm for Anthropology." In *Ethos*. Vol. 18, No. 1 (March., 1990), pp. 5-47.

Cvetkovich, Ann. *Depression: A Public Feeling*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2012.

Das, Veena. “Language and Body: Transactions in the Construction of Pain.” In *Social Suffering*. eds. Arthur Kleinman, Veena Das, and Margaret Lock. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997, pp. 67-92.

Das, Veena. *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.

Das, Veena. “Wittgenstein and Anthropology.” In *Annual Review of Anthropology*. Vol. 27 (1998), pp. 171-195.

Desjarlais, Robert R. *Shelter Blues: Sanity and Selfhood Among the Homeless*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997.

Duranti, Alessandro. “Husserl, intersubjectivity, and anthropology.” In *Anthropological Theory*. V. 10, No. 1-2 (2010), pp. 16-35.

de Certeau, Michel. *The Practice of Everyday Life*. Trans. Steven F. Rendall. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

De Neve, Geert. *The Everyday Politics of Labour: Working Lives in India's Informal Economy.* Delhi: Social Science Press, 2005.

Douglas, Mary. *Purity and Danger.* New York: Routledge, 1996.

Eisenlohr, Patrick. *Sounding Islam: voice, media, and sonic atmospheres in an Indian Ocean world.* (Open Access edition). Luminos: University of California Press, 2018.

Elson, Diane and Ruth Pearson. “‘Nimble Fingers Make Cheap Workers’: An Analysis of Women's Employment in Third World Export Manufacturing.” In *Feminist Review*. No. 7 (Spring, 1981), pp. 87-107.

Engels, Friedrich. *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State.* New York: Viking Penguin Inc., 1985.

Engels, Friedrich. *The Condition of the Working Class in England.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958.

England, Kim. *Who Will Mind the Baby? Geographies of Child-Care and Working Mothers*. London: Routledge, 1996.

Ernst, Carl. *Eternal Garden: mysticism, history, and politics at a South Asian Sufi center.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991

Fallon, S. W. *A new Hindustani-English dictionary, with illustrations from Hindustani literature and folk-lore*. Banaras, London: Printed at the Medical Hall Press; Trubner and Co., 1879.

Fernandes, Leela. *Producing Workers: The Politics of Gender, Class, and Culture in the Calcutta Jute Mills*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997.

Finkelstein, Maura. *The Archive of Loss: Lively Ruination in Mill Land Mumbai*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2019.

Forbes, Geraldine. *Women in Modern India.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Foucault, Michele. *The Archaeology of Knowledge and the Discourse on Language*. Trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith. New York: Pantheon Books, 1972.

Foucault, Michele. *History of Sexuality, Vol. 1: An Introduction*. Trans. Robert Hurley. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.

Foucault, Michele. *The Order of Things: An archaeology of the human sciences*. London: Routledge, 2002.

Foucault, Michele. *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977*. Ed. Colin Gordon. New York: Pantheon Books, 1980.

Fracchia, Joseph. "The Capitalist Labour-Process and the Body in Pain: The Corporeal Depths of Marx's Concept of Immiseration." In *Historical Materialism*. Vol.16 (2008) p. 35-66.

Fraser, Nancy. *Unruly Practices: Power, Discourse and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989.

Freeman, Carla. *High Tech and High Heels in the Global Economy: Women, Work, and Pink-Collar Identities in the Caribbean*. Durham'm: Duke University Press, 2000.

Gargani, Aldo Giorgio. "Intentionality in Wittgenstein's Work." In *Wittgenstein: Mind and Language*, edited R. Egidi. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1995.

Geertz, Clifford. "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight." In *Daedalus*. Vol. 134, No. 4, 50 Years (Fall, 2005), pp. 56-86.

Geniusas, Sanulius. "The origins of phenomenology of pain: Brentano, Stumpf and Husserl." In *Continental Philosophy Review*. Vol. 47, Issue 1 (2014), pp. 1-17.

Geniusas, Saulius. "The Subject of Pain: Husserl's Discovery of the Lived-Body." In *Research in Phenomenology*. Vol. 44 (2014), p. 384-404.

Grosz, Elizabeth. *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2001.

Hansen, Karen Tranberg. *Salaula: The World of Secondhand Clothing and Zambia*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2000.

Haraway, Donna. *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*. New York: Routledge, 1991.

Haraway, Donna. "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective." In *Feminist Studies*. Vol. 14, No. 3 (Autumn 1988), pp. 575-299.

Harriss-White, Barbara. *India Working: Essays on Society and Economy*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Harvey, David. *Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001.

Harvey, David. "Time-Space Compression and the Postmodern Condition," in David Held and Anthony McGrew eds. *The Global Transformations Reader: An Introduction to the Globalization Debate.* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2003.

Harvey, Penny and Hannah Knox. "The Enchantments of Infrastructure." In *Mobilities*. Vol. 7, No. 4 (Nov. 2012), pp. 521-536.

Hasnain, Nadeem and Sheikh Abrar Husain. *Shias and Shia Islam in India : a study in society and culture*. New Delhi: Harnam Publications, 1988.

Haynes, Douglas. *Small Town Capitalism in Western India: Artisans, Merchants and the Making of the Informal Economy, 1870-1960.* New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Hewamanne, Sandya. *Stitching Identities in a Free Trade Zone: Gender and Politics*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.

Hindman, Heather and Anne-Meike Fechter. *Inside the Everyday Lives of Development Workers*. Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press, 2011.

Hindman, Heather and Robert Oppenheim. "Lines of Labor an Desire: "Korean Desire" in Contemporary Kathmandu," in *Anthropological Quarterly*. Vol. 87, No. 2, p. 465-496.

Hjortshoj, Keith. *Urban Structures and transformations in Lucknow, India*. Ithaca, N.Y.: Program on International Studies and Planning, in conjunction with the Program in Urban and Regional Studies and the South Asia Program, Cornell University, 1979.

Hochschild, Arlie Russell. *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983.

hooks, bell. *Yearning: Race, gender, and cultural politics*. Boston: South End Press, 1990.

Howes, David. "The Skinscape: Reflections on the Dermatological Turn." In *Body and Society*. Vol. 24, No. 1-2 (2018), p. 225-239.

Husserl, Edmund. *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*. New York: Routledge, 2002.

Hyder, Syed Akbar. *Reliving Karbala: Martyrdom in South Asian Memory.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006.

Hyndman, Jennifer. "Mind the gap: bridging feminist and political geography through geopolitics," in *Political Geography*. Vol. 23 (2004), p. 307-322.

Ingold, Tim. "On weaving a basket." In *The Perception of the Environment: Essays on Livelihood, Dwelling and Skill*. London: Routledge, 2000.

Jain, Sumeet and David. M. R. Orr. “Ethnographic perspectives on global mental health.” In *Transcultural Psychiatry*. Vol. 53, No. 6 (2016), pp. 685-695.

Jauegui, Beatrice. *Provisional Authority: Police, Order, and Security in India.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016.

Jeffrey, Craig. *Timepass: Youth, Class, and the Politics of Waiting in India*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010.

Jegathesan, Mythri. *Tea and Solidarity: Tamil Women and Work in Postwar Sri Lanka*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2019.

Jones, Justin. *Shi‘a Islam in colonial India: religion, community and sectarianism*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Kandiyoti, Deniz. “Bargaining with Patriarchy.” In *Gender and Society*. Vol. 2, No 3 (September 1988), pp. 274-290.

Khan, Naveeda. “Flaws in the Flow: Roads and their Modernity in Pakistan.” In *Social Text*. Vol. 24, No. 4 (Winter 2006), pp. 87-113.

Khubchandani, Kareem. “Dance Floor Divas: Fieldwork, Fabulating, and Fathoming in Queer Bangalore.” In *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*. Vol. 43, No. 2 (2020), pp. 319-331.

Kirmani, Nida. “Can Fun Be Feminist? Gender, Space, and Mobility in Lyari, Karachi.” In *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*. Vol. 43, No. 2 (2020), pp. 232-242.

Kleinman, Arthur and Joan Kleinman. “Suffering and its professional transformation: toward an ethnography of interpersonal experience.” In *Culture, medicine and psychiatry*. Vol. 15, No. 3. (September 1991), pp. 275-301.

Kuldova, Tereza. ““Fatalist Luxuries: Of Inequality, Wasting, and the Antiwork Ethic in India”.” In *Cultural Politics*. Vol. 12, Issue 1 (March 2016), p. 110-129.

Kumar, Nita. *Artisans of Banaras: Popular Culture and Identity, 1880-1986*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988.

Landes, Joan B. ed. *Feminism, the Public and the Private*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Lara, Maria Pia. *Moral Textures: Feminist Narratives in the Public Space*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1998.

Larrabee, Mary Jeanne. “Time and Spatial Models: Temporality in Husserl.” In *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*. Vol. 49, No. 3 (Mar., 1989), pp. 373-392.

Lefebvre, Henri. Donald Nicholdon-Smith trans. *The Production of Space*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1991.

Legg, Stephen. "A Pre-Partitioned City? Anti-Colonial and Communal *Mohallas* in Inter0War Delhi." In *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*. Vol. 42, No. 1 (2019), pp. 170-187.

Llewellyn-Jones, Rosie. *A Fatal Friendship: The Nawabs, the British, and the City of Lucknow.* Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Llewellyn-Jones, Rosie. *The Last King of India: Wajid Ali Shah*. London: Hurst & Company, 2014

Lutgendorf, Philip. "Making tea in India: Chai, capitalism, culture." In *Thesis Eleven*. Vol. 113, No. 1 (2012), pp. 11-31.

Luxemburg, Rosa. *The Accumulation of Capital*. Trans. Agnes Schwarzschild. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1951.

Lynch, Caitrin. *Juki Girls, Good Girls: Gender and Cultural Politics in Sri Lanka's Global Garment Industry*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007.

Malkki, Liisa. *Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory, and National Cosmology among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995.

Manfredi, Paola. *Chikankari: A Lucknawi Tradition*. Delhi: Niyogi Books, 2017.

Marx, Karl. *Capital: Volume 1*. Trans. Ben Fowkes. London: Penguin Classics, 1990.

Massey, Doreen. *Space, Place, and Gender*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994.

Massumi, Brian. "The Future Birth of the Affective Fact: The Political Ontology of Threat. In *The Affect Theory Reader*, edited by Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010.

Mauss, Marcel. *The Gift: The form and reason for exchange in archaic societies.* London: Routledge, 1990.

Mauss, Marcel. "Techniques of the Body," *Economy and Society*. Vol. 2, Issue 1 (1973), pp. 70-88.

McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. New York: Routledge, 1995.

McDowell, Linda. *Gender, Identity and Place: Understanding Feminist Geographies*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1999.

McDowell, Linda. "Women/Gender/Feminisms: doing feminist geography." In *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*. Vol. 21, No. 3, 1997, pp. 381-400.

McDowell, Linda and Doreen Massey. "A Woman's Place?." In *Geography Matters! A Reader*. Edited by Doreen Massey and John Allen. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1984.

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. Trans. Colin Smith. *Phenomenology of Perception.* London: Routledge Kegan and Paul, 2002.

Mies, Maria. *The Lace Makers of Narsapur: Indian Housewives Produce for the World Market*. London: Zed Press, 1982.

Minault, Gail. *Gender, language, and learning: essays in Indo-Muslim cultural history.* Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2009.

Minault, Gail. *Secluded Scholars: Women's Education and Muslim Social Reform in Colonial India.* Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourse." In *boundary 2*. Vol. 12, No. 3, On Humanism and the University I: The Discourse of Humanism (Spring-Autumn 1984), pp. 333-358.

Mohsini, Mira. "Engagement and disengagement from the margins: perceptions of the state by urban Muslim artisans in India." In *Contemporary South Asia*. Vol. 19, No. 3 (Sept. 2011), pp. 281-296.

Mookherjee, Nayanika. *The Spectral Wound: Sexual Violence, Public Memories, and the Bangladesh War of 1971.* Durham: Duke University Press, 2015.

Moran, Dermot. "Husserl, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty on Embodiment, Touch and the 'Double Sensation'." In *Sartre on the Body*. ed. Katherine J. Morris. New York: Palmgrave Macmillon, 2010, pp. 41-66.

Moran, Dermot. "Intentionality: Lived Experience, Bodily Comportment, and the Horizon of the World." In *The Oxford Handbook of The History of Phenomenology*, edited by Dan Zahavi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), p. 579-603.

Moran, Dermot. "Sartre on Embodiment, Touch, and the "Double Sensation." In *Philosophy Today*. SPEP Supplement (2010). Pp. 135-141.

Mouffe, Chantal. "Feminism, Citizenship, and Radical Democratic Politics," in *The Return of the Political*. London: Verso, 1993.

Nair, Janaki. *Miners and Millhands: Work, Culture and Politics in Princely Mysore*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1998.

Nanda, Reena. *Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya: A Biography.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Oldenburg, Veena Talwar. *The Making of Colonial Lucknow, 1856-1877*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984.

Ong, Aihwa. "Colonialism and Modernity: Feminist Re-presentations of Women in Non-Western Societies." In *Impressions.* Vol. 3/4, No. 2 (1988), p. 79-93.

Ong, Aihwa. *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline: Factory Women in Malaysia*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010.

Ortner, Sherry B. "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" In M. Z. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere eds. *Woman, culture, and society*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1974, pp. 68-87.

Ortner, Sherry and Harriet Whitehead eds. *Sexual Meanings: The Cultural Construction of Gender and Sexuality.* Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

Paine, Sheila. *Chikan Embroidery: The Floral Whitework of India*. Bucks, UK: Shire Publications, 1989.

Parthasarathi, Prasannan. *The Transition to a Colonial Economy: Weavers, Merchants, and Kings in South India, 1720-1800*. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Pinto, Sarah. *Daughters of Parvati: Women and Madness in Contemporary India*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014.

Platts, John T. (John Thompson). *A dictionary of Urdu, classical Hindi, and English*. London: W. H. Allen & Co., 1884.

Puar, Jasbir. *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017.

Puwar, Nirmal. *Space Invaders: Race, Gender and Bodies Out of Place*. New York: Berg Publishers, 2004.

Ramberg, Lucinda. *Given to the Goddess: South Indian Devadasis and the Sexuality of Religion*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014.

Riello, Giorgio and Tirthankar Roy eds. *How India Clothed the World: The World of South Asian Textiles, 1500-1850*. Leiden: Brill, 2009.

Ring, Laura A. *Zenana: Everyday Peace in a Karachi Apartment Building*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006.

Roberts, Dorothy E. "Spiritual and Menial Housework." In *Yale Journal of Law and Feminism*. Vol. 9, No. 51 (1997), pp. 51-80.

Robinson, Francis. *Separatism among Indian Muslims : the politics of the United Provinces' Muslims, 1860-1923*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1974.

Rosaldo, Michelle Zimbalist and Louise Lamphere. *Women, Culture, and Society.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974.

Rose, Gillian. *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1993.

Roy, Tirthankar. *Artisans and Industrialization: Indian Weaving in the Twentieth Century*. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1993.

Roy, Tirthankar. *Cloth and Commerce: Textiles in Colonial India.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

Rubin, Gayle. "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the "Political Economy" of Sex." In Rayna R. Reiter ed. *Toward an Anthropology of Women*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975, p. 157-210.

Rudrappa, Shamila. *Discounted Life: The Price of Global Surrogacy in India*. New York: New York University Press, 2015.

Scarry, Elaine. *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1985.

Scheper-Hughes, Nancy. *Death without weeping: the violence of everyday life in Brazil*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.

Schimmel, Annemarie. *As through a Veil: Mystical Poetry in Islam*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.

Scott, Joan. "The Evidence of Experience." In *Critical Inquiry*. Vol. 17 No. 4 (Summer 1991), pp. 773-797.

Scott, Robert. "Suffering and the feeling of suffering in Marx's Capital." In *Textual Practice*. Vol. ahead-of-print. (2020) p. 1-18.

Sen, Samit. *Women and Labour in Late Colonial India: The Bengal Jute Industry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Sharp, Leslie. "The Commodification of the Body and its Parts." In *Annual Review of Anthropology*. Vol. 29, 2010. pp. 287-328.

Sharar, Abdul Halim*. Lucknow: The Last Phase of an Oriental Culture*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Singh, Andrea M. and Anita Kelles-Viitanen. *Invisible Hands: Women in Home-Based Production*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1987.

Singh, Radhika. *The Fabric of Our Lives: The Story of Fabindia.* New Delhi: Viking, Penguin Books India, 2011.

Singh, Venna. *Romancing with Chikankari*. New Delhi: Tushar Publications 2004.

Slatman, Jenny. "A strange hand: On self-recognition and recognition of another." In *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences* (2009) no. 8 pp. 321-342.

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. “Can the Subaltern Speak?” In Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg eds. *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1988, pp. 271-313.

Starvo, Elain. “The Use and Abuse of Simone de Beauvoir: Re-Evaluating the French Poststructuralist Critique.” In *The European Journal of Women’s Studies*. Vol. 6 (1999), pp. 263-280.

Stewart, Katherine. “Atmospheric attunements.” In *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. Vol. 29 (2001), pp. 445-453.

Taipale, Joona. *Phenomenology and Embodiment: Husserl and the Constitution of Subjectivity.* Northwestern University Press, 2014.

Tarlo, Emma. *Clothing Matters: Dress and Identity in India.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Thrift, Nigel. “Movement-space: The changing domain of thinking resulting from the development of new kinds of spatial awareness.” In *Economy and Society*. Vol. 33, No. 4 (2004). pp. 582-604.

Tsing, Anna Lowenhaupt. *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen: Marginality in an Out-of-the-Way Place*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.

Tuan, Yi-Fu. *Space and place the perspective of experience.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

Urry, John. “Proximity and Mobility.” In *Sociology*. Vol. 36, No.2 (May 2002), pp. 255-274.

Van Peursen, C. A. “Edmund Husserl and Ludwig Witgenstein.” In *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*. Vol. 20, No. 2 (Dec., 1959), pp. 181-197.

Varma, Saiba. *The Occupied Clinic: Militarism and Care in Kashmir*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2020.

Verma, Triputa. *Karkhanas Under the Mughals: From Akbar to Aurangzeb*. Delhi: Pragati Publications, 1994.

Whitford, Margaret ed. *The Irigaray Reader: Luce Irigaray*. Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1991.

Wilkinson-Weber, Clare M. *Embroidering Lives: Women's Work and Skill in the Lucknow Embroidery Industry*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999.

Wilkinson-Weber, Clare and Alicia Ory DeNicola eds. *Critical Craft: Technology, Globalization, and Capitalism*. London: Bloomsbury, 2016.

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Preliminary studies for the 'Philosophical investigations', generally known as the Blue and Brown books*. Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1958.

Wright, Melissa W. *Disposable Women and Other Myths of Global Capitalism*. New York: Routledge, 2006.

Young, Iris Marion. *On Female Body Experience: "Throwing Like a Girl" and Other Essays*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.